

QUID NOVI

Journal des étudiant-e-s
en droit de l'université McGill

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QUID NOVI

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*Journal des étudiant-e-s
en droit de l'université McGill*

McGill Law's Weekly Student Newspaper

*Volume 35, n° 18
25 mars 2014 | March 25th 2014*

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WANT TO TALK ? TU VEUX T'EXPRIMER ?

Envoyez vos commentaires ou articles avant
jeudi 17h à l'adresse : quid.law@mcgill.ca.

Toute contribution doit indiquer le nom de
l'auteur, son année d'étude ainsi qu'un titre
pour l'article. L'article ne sera publié qu'à la
discretion du comité de rédaction, qui basera
sa décision sur la politique de
rédaction.

Contributions should preferably be submitted
as a .doc attachment (and not, for instance, a
".docx").

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SPECIAL EDITORIAL

First and foremost, the Student Well-Being Committee would like to thank all of the students, staff & faculty who have shared their thoughts & experiences with us over the past year. Un extra-gros merci est dû à tous ceux qui ont contribué à cette édition speciale du Quid.

Too often we equate mental health with mental illness –something aberrant, and most of all, something other people have. But, like physical health, mental health is something we all have, all the time. Good bad and all the in between: mental health is always a part of who we are. We're all in this one together. The conception that we are not is one of the many factors that contributes to the continued stigmatization of mental health issues.

Avec ces idées en tête, nous vous encourageons à lire ces contributions en pensant au futur. Nous vous encourageons à penser à l'hygiène mentale, aux mesures préventives, et à ce que nous pouvons faire en tant que membres de la Faculté et de la profession, afin de faire progresser notre compréhension et nos capacités en ce qui concerne la santé mentale. En tant que juristes – et plus fondamentalement, en tant qu'êtres humains – nous serons sans doute appelés à faire face à l'état de santé mental de ceux qui nous entourent. Le Comité du bien-être vous encourage à commencer à cultiver vos capacités en réfléchissant à ce qui se passe devant et entre nous.

Bonne lecture!



THE LAST CLOSET

'Is there anyone in the reception area from my faculty?...?' The voice is quivering with fear, the anxiety palpable. This student on his cell is making this enquiry from the street, just outside the OSD, before making his way to our office to discuss his file. I wish I could say that this illustration of the deep fear of stigma felt by students from the Law faculty using our services was anecdotal. Such displays of utter fear and immobilizing self-consciousness from Law students in fact are an almost daily occurrence.

Yet the faculty does not stand out in statistical terms, in any way, shape or form. A significant number of students from the Law faculty are registered with the OSD: 5 to 10% each year, but this is characteristic of all faculties. We have lived a sharp increase, over the last three years, of students experiencing barriers in their access to learning: a threefold increase in 4 years. The student population from the law faculty follows the same patterns. In every respect the volume of service requests, issues with access to learning, and the student profiles are similar to those observed campus wide. Why then is there such fear of stigma and reticence to disclose and seek services amongst law students?

Trying to ascertain specific causes for this fear might be a vain case of solving the old 'the chicken or the egg?' question. On the one hand, students blame this climate of fear on an ingrained 'culture' of competitiveness that makes any disclosure appear a weakness and forces them to hide in order to thrive. This, they say, pushes the most eloquent self-advocates 'back in the closet'; as a result the level of grassroots outspokenness about Disability is almost nil despite the faculty's long standing interest and involvement in the field.

From a teaching or administrative point of view, one can understand if this may not be seen as a pressing agenda item: few students speak about the barriers they face in access to learning and Disability is rarely brought up formally as an issue affecting, not just the outside world and community, but the very heart of the faculty. The Law faculty also bears the burden of having been almost too precocious in its management of Disability issues: very early on the desire to protect confidentiality became the cornerstone of the faculty's procedural measures to address Disability: it is not to be discussed with instructors so as not to discriminate against anyone.

While these legal safeguards were necessary at a time when Disability was seen, through the medical lens and the deficit model, as a 'label' which could too often taint one's academic profile or employment potential, things have radically changed. The social model of Disability has been widely embraced over the last two

decades in education, social work and even employment. More and more people see Disability simply as a lack of fit between an individual's characteristics and an environment's specific format or practices. The discourse now focuses on 'barriers', to be eroded and removed, rather than on inherent diagnostic labels. Can anonymity, in such a model and in the present era, still purport to be seen as a person's best protection or tool of inclusion?

From the individual perspective of a student making his or her way through legal education at McGill, the impact of the social model is significant. If disability is not an inherent personal attribute, but seen rather as a construct that depicts a 'lack of fit' with the environment, then it will be important for each to reflect on their individual trajectory to identify and navigate barriers optimally. A student's profile may render a specific course arduous, if there is no compatibility between learning style and teaching or evaluation formats. And yet, will the situation necessarily be the same in all courses, or – importantly – in the work place? This is a powerful rhetoric for the individual facing barriers, as it re-empowers instead of labelling. Barriers can be analyzed, avoided, eroded and removed. The notion that optimal performance remains attainable, in learning or work environments that are congenially designed, is a huge boost to confidence and self-realization.

The employability issue is one that must imperatively be discussed when examining the way we approach Disability in universities. One role of higher education is to prepare students for real world engagement. Might it be fair to observe candidly that, currently, legal education across Canada prepares students for a 'one size fits all' job market that is no longer a reality? Diversity in employment format is increasing dramatically in the new millennium, not to say exploding, and the legal profession is no exception.

The demands of large corporate law firms on their employees are known to all and widely depicted in popular culture. It may be quite true that this is a field that is not willing to reflect on the barriers it creates for employees, one that is reluctant to see Disability as less than a threat to optimal daily billing. However, how many of law graduates will aim for these large firms or remain there for a significant amount of time? I started work in the City as a solicitor, back in London, in the early 90s with the majority of my undergrad cohort and, now approaching my fifties, I can count on the fingers of one single hand the colleagues who are still in that work environment. A legal training opens rich and diverse career paths, the majority of which will be congenial and fulfilling for individuals with a wide array of learning styles and profiles. Our legal education should therefore cater for this neurocognitive

diversity.

Some of you may wonder at this stage why I have not yet mentioned Mental Health explicitly in an issue of Quid focusing specifically on this topic. This has been quite intentional on my part as, too often these days, Mental Health is discussed in higher education as an alarming and new concern. It is not a new phenomenon, and should not raise more alarm bells or make instructors more uncomfortable than any other part of the Disability discourse and agenda. Students reporting Mental Health issues do represent a large proportion of OSD service users (approximately 26%), but this has been the case for some time now. The notion of 'lack of fit' with the environment is equally valid as a construct for MH issues – with the added observation that the learning environment can, in some cases, not merely be out-of-synch with the learner's profile but also exacerbate the diagnosis itself and serve as a trigger for more severe symptoms.

Even amongst access professionals, there is the insidious tendency to approach Mental Health differently than other neurocognitive impairments and to focus on 'cure' rather than the widening of access in the learning environment itself, thereby reinforcing the 'deficit model'. There is a persistent socio-cultural trend in the Western world that sees us seek a therapeutic (and often medicalized) approach to all things mental health related, rather

than facilitating access, adaptive functioning and inclusion. In this sense, unfortunately, the fear of stigma may well be heightened in students affected by MH issues, as even seasoned professionals will have a tendency to stress the 'get better' message before considering measures of inclusion. There is little doubt hence that Mental Health issues run the very real risk of becoming the 'closet in the closet', unless the faculty of Law collectively embraces the fact that many students have been, are and will remain affected by Mental Health issues and that their potential for success, degree completion and employability remains the same as that of their peers provided awareness is created, flexibility is afforded, and proactive strategies are developed by the teaching environment and infrastructure.

I would like to thank Prof. Robert Leckey for the inspirational title he suggested.

ERIN

PASSING THE BUCK

I cannot say that I was happy before I came to law school. How could I have been? I started here in September 2012 and in April 2012, I almost killed myself.

I often explain it to people this way: if you felt sick all the time, you'd see a doctor. If you learned you had cancer, you would have it treated, knowing that the disease was out of your control. Otherwise, you'd die. This is no different with depression - anyone who has felt suicidal, and maybe anyone who has had the terrible experience of knowing someone who committed suicide, probably knows this. You feel sick. It's out of your control. If you don't do something to treat it, you will die. Death is the inevitable end result. It just occurs at your own hands instead of out of them.

I was like you before April 2012: I had difficulty even imagining how someone might want to take their own life, or how they would even let themselves get to that point without getting help. I had difficulty imagining this before that day that I stopped fighting the feelings of self-judgment, self-hatred, and self-blaming and just let them wash over me. It was so much easier to just stop

fighting them.

I was, unlike some, aware that I was sick; a tiny part of my mind remained rational and therefore terrified, understanding that something should desperately be done about the fact that I had been in bed for three days crying, barely eating, not going out, and not able to remember the last time I showered. That tiny rational part of my mind tried some things: I called a suicide hotline, hoping that they would help me, but it turns out that unless you want to kill yourself right now and unless you admit to it, they just tell you to see a doctor. I even got up the courage to desperately call a friend and tell her how terrible I felt - she didn't seem to know what to do, and I don't blame her. Nothing at all was important to me. My life stretched out in front of me and it seemed impossible that I should survive so many more years that would only be like this. It was almost soothing to stand in the metro station, think about movies I'd seen, and allow myself to imagine, just for a moment, what it would be like for it to be over. It wasn't a super fantastic and wonderful thing to imagine; it was just that dying seemed less shitty than living.

I am glad now that I was saved. I can't quite say at this point what distinguished my experience from that of so many others - young, smart, successful, beautiful, with caring friends and a supportive family, with everything going for them - who were like me but whose lives ended where mine did not. It certainly wasn't the doctor who saw me at the CLSC, quickly telling me that I needed to contact family and friends or else this would be "really, really difficult" and telling me that he wanted me to "try" anti-depressive medication for a year, before sending me back out there by myself. I wasn't saved because I contacted friends and family, because I felt too ashamed to until the worst was over. It wasn't counselling, because when you're not a student or when you don't have an employee assistance program with your job, you won't get to see a psychologist for cheap, and if you do, it won't be for another few weeks or so. It certainly wasn't an understanding society that recognizes mental health as being as volatile and unpredictable as physical health, because our society doesn't. Sometimes I think it was actually the social worker at the CLSC who saw me first, whose English was not strong but who clearly saw the gravity of my situation and wanted to help; unlike the doctor, her compassion showed. Maybe it was that the following week I stopped working from home, alone, and went back to full-time at the office, which ended up being enough of a distraction to get me through the worst. To this day I do not know. A combination of small things, perhaps. A detail somewhere. What kept me alive may have been just as out of my control as the feelings that made me want to end my life.

When you come out of depression, this is the beginning. I went back to counselling when I started at McGill, at first seeing someone every week and then every two weeks as I started to get a bit better - McGill does this two week thing, because so many people need counselling and they want to try to fit as many in as possible. For my first year of law school, I cried the entire hour I was at counselling, at almost every single appointment. After the appointments I would cry some more, and then feel terrible, unable to do much for hours afterwards. It was sometimes difficult to get work done, of course. And then I would feel worse, and my marks probably suffered.

It's funny what the world bounces back to you when you throw something out at it. I decided to be open with my new law school colleagues about seeing a counsellor, in hopes that it might normalize the experience for me and for them and for all of us. Funny how many people end up telling you that actually, they see a counsellor too. Funny how many you end up crossing paths with at the McGill counselling office. There's also one or two that take you aside and says thanks - your honesty made it okay for me to go get help.

A year later I went back to the same CLSC I went to when I was depressed, for an unrelated reason, and the doctor who treated me asked about my depression when he pulled up my file. I said things were okay now. While he gave me a pap test, he said, "If it makes you feel any better, pretty much every law student ends up here with some kind of mental health issue at some point." An exaggeration, but not the first time I've heard law students are overrepresented in doctors' offices for psychological reasons. A good thing, I supposed. Rational people that we are, we understand that at least

we should try to get help.

Now that the elephant in the room has been outed at the law faculty - that our mental health poses as many barriers to our success here as our physical health, and maybe more - I do hope that the faculty won't continue to pass the buck. I hope the faculty will question what role it is playing in perpetuating mental health problems. I get frustrated when I wonder whether I would learn everything I reasonably need to know in any given course if the professor gave us 50% less reading (probably); when I wonder whether marks are necessary to a meaningful learning process (they're not); when I wonder whether it makes sense for the faculty to suggest to students that if they are struggling with mental health they should talk to the SAO staff, when those are the same staff we would see if we wanted to go on exchange, got accused of academic offenses, or wanted to be recommended to apply as a clerk at the SCC. It doesn't make sense. I also wonder whether passing the buck to inadequate mental health services and counselling, as well as other general McGill services, is enough. And here for sure I know that it isn't - these are just bandaid solutions. Counselling helps me deal with my every day life enough to keep going, enough to avoid another crisis, another close call. But undoing years of unhealthy psychological habits takes years.

What is the faculty going to do in the meantime? Continue to rely on, archaic, outdated notions of law school learning that involve more reading than could possibly be read, continue to pander to employers' expectations to see transcripts with curved grades on them? Continue to suggest bandaid solutions? I do truly wonder, however - for here I really don't know the answer - whether the faculty is generous and flexible with students who say they need a leave of absence or to reduce their courses to part-time for mental health issues. I wonder whether the faculty will truly take responsibility for examining its culture and that culture's impact on the mental health of students. It needs to happen; if it didn't, I'd be putting my full name on this article and not worrying about who might think what.

Dean Topsakal was right about one thing in her Quid article, published alongside the mental health survey results back in February however - that perfect law student really doesn't exist. If my experiences have taught me anything, it's that humans are pretty excellent at pretending everything is okay. Probably most of you know who I am and probably most of you will be surprised at this story, because of just how good I am at pretending everything is okay. I do it often, even though from time to time I still sink down, I still feel that twinge of fear that things might slip again, someday. Until our learning environment can be more conducive to good mental health, we do need to remember how good we can all be at pretending - and hopefully continue to treat each other with compassion, kindness, and patience.


ANONYMOUS

DO YOU HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS?

- Who are you?
- How are you?
- What defines you?
- On what does your self-worth and identity depend?
- Does your identity depend on things you can control or is it extrinsic?
- If it is extrinsic, why do you give that extrinsic factor so much power over your life?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you boast about your strengths and hide your weaknesses?
- Are you envious of people whose strengths are your weaknesses?
 - o Do you ally yourself with them so that together you can be unstoppable?
 - o Do you resent them, upholding schadenfreude to the best of your ability?
- Did your challenges define you?
- Do you see failure as an opportunity to learn?
- Do you see failure as a source of insecurity?
- Do you envy and imitate or do you take the hard road of finding yourself in everything that you do?
- Are you confident?
- Are you insecure?
- Is your confidence informed by something within you, something bigger than you, or do you beg for approval?
- How do you feed your soul?
- Do you know your comparative advantage(s)?
- What is the purpose of your life?
- Are you a person of faith?
- What informs your faith?
- Do you have one line of conduct because your struggle taught you that your actions define you and you must act with integrity at all time?
- Do you find yourself thinking and acting on the possibilities or do you get stuck in ruts and often only see difficulties and limitations?
- Do you have the courage to act with integrity and lead even if you don't have a title and the compensation that should follow leadership?
- How do you act when you see other people suffering?
- Do you know how to love?
- Do you love selfishly or selflessly?
- Have you ever been an outsider? Do you need reassurance from the institution/ group you are apart off or can you stand alone?
- If you lost everything today, who would you be?

Diagnosis: «You're someone who is different, but who wants to be the same as everyone else. And that, in my view, is a serious illness. [Is wanting to be different a serious illness?] It is if you force yourself to be the same as everyone else. It causes neuroses, psychoses, and paranoia. It's a distortion of nature, it goes against God's laws, for in all the world's woods and forests, he did not create a single leaf the same as another. But you think it's insane to be different, and that's why you chose to live in Villete, because everyone is different here, and so you appear to be the same as everyone else. [...] People go against nature because they lack the courage to be different».

Dr. Igor, Veronika Decides to Die by Paulo Coelho



**NICHOLAS
CHOINIÈRE**

SKIT NITE SUCCESS

Skit Nite, la revue musicale et humoristique annuelle de la Faculté de droit, a eu lieu mardi le 18 mars au Club Soda. Grâce au soutien de la communauté, plus de 300 billets ont été vendus et près de 4000\$ ont ainsi été récoltés, bien au-delà des attentes.

Cette année le spectacle avait comme thématique « Saturday Night Live ». Les comédiens et musiciens ont été à la hauteur de la célèbre émission de télévision américaine et la soirée fut un véritable succès. Soulignons d'ailleurs la grande variété de numéros cette année : vidéos, numéros style Broadway, chorale et sketch plus traditionnels étaient tous au rendez-vous. Qui plus est, nous avons eu la chance d'avoir sur scène des étudiants de toutes les années ainsi que des membres du personnel.

Il serait impossible dans un court article pour le Quid—qui, soit dit en passant, est très généreux de publier cet article comme il a lui-même été cible de certaines blagues au courant de la soirée—de passer en revue tous les numéros. Je tiens toutefois à mentionner certains des points saillants de la soirée.

Plusieurs des comédiens et musiciens ayant participé à Skit Nite Live en étaient à leur tout premier spectacle à la Faculté. Nous espérons avoir l'occasion de les revoir l'an prochain (et même après). Nous avons aussi un nouvel animateur, François Arsenault, qui a su relever le défi avec brio. En plus d'être impliqué d'une façon ou d'une autre dans la plupart des numéros, il a charmé le public avec ses interventions entre les numéros. Je note par ailleurs qu'il a changé de costume à maintes reprises. Ceux qui n'étaient pas dans les coulisses ont manqué la meilleure partie du spectacle : Frank qui court un peu partout dans les loges avec des morceaux de linge qui traînent ici et là en se préparant pour son prochain numéro.

Frank n'était pas le seul impliqué dans plusieurs numéros. Le Skit Nite Band a regalé le public avec sa version de Can't Stop, Say It Ain't So, Sweet Home Alabama et Johnny B Goode. Pour leur part, les Transsymphoniques ont divisé leur numéro en deux parties.

Nous n'avons pas été déçus par leur medley de chansons populaires adaptées à la réalité mcgilloise. Ils semblent s'améliorer avec chaque année qui passe !

Mentionnons par ailleurs que plusieurs bénévoles en étaient à leur dernier Skit Nite. Le numéro « A Message from the Smithsonian Institute for the Study of Anti-Social Behaviours », écrit par Sheel Chaudhuri, nous a rappelé de façon assez cocasse que plusieurs des étudiants actuellement en troisième année auront déjà terminé leurs études l'an prochain.

En somme, Skit Nite édition 2014 a été un grand succès. Aucun spectacle n'est parfait, cependant. Les points principaux à améliorer, à mon avis, sont que le spectacle a terminé trop tard et qu'il n'y a pas eu assez de participation des professeurs. La première situation est due au grand enthousiasme des étudiants pour Skit Nite. Nous avons 25 numéros cette année, ce qui est incroyable mais qui implique aussi plus de perte de temps lors des transitions. Quant au second problème, le manque de professeurs, je tiens à rappeler que c'est normalement aux étudiants de proposer des skits aux professeurs. À tous les étudiants qui hésitent à aborder leurs professeurs, sachez qu'en règle générale le personnel de la Faculté aime l'évènement tout autant que les étudiants!

Pour conclure, j'aimerais remercier tous ceux qui, de près ou de loin, ont rendu possible Skit Nite. Je tiens à féliciter surtout Justine Brien pour avoir organisé son tout premier Skit Nite. De plus, le spectacle n'aurait pas été possible sans le travail et le dévouement de Jérémy Boulanger-Bonnely, Alexandra Bornac et Frank Arsenault.

Pour plus d'informations sur comment s'impliquer l'an prochain à Skit Nite ou Law School of Rock, envoyez un courriel à law.got.talent@gmail.com. Skit Nite a été présenté par Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP en association avec Scotiabank.

**NATALKA
HARAS**

FACES OF CHANGE

ANNOUNCING THE FACES OF CHANGE CROWDFUNDING CLASS GIFT CAMPAIGN



McGill Law students are as diverse as the careers they aspire to pursue. Help the Faculty reflect how truly unique it is by supporting the Faces of Change project, which aims to proudly display the wide spectrum of accomplishments by more recent McGill Law grads throughout the Faculty.

This year, members of our graduating class, the Faculty's student body, and indeed the whole Faculty community, are encouraged to participate in McGill's first crowdfunding campaign online. The Faculty's Faces of Change project will be launched at the LSA coffeehouse on April 3, 2014, and will run online until Convocation.

Law school is in itself a daunting undertaking, but figuring out what to do next can be even more so. When it comes to career planning, a little inspiration can go a long way. Walking through McGill's Faculty of Law, the astounding achievements of its alumni are displayed prominently in a collection of photos depicting leading lawyers, judges of the Supreme Court, and lawmakers, providing just a sample of the impressive accomplishments of McGill grads.

But students today are pursuing a hugely diverse range of careers after exiting the McGill gates. We believe they present a wonderful opportunity to broaden this collection and to allow the enormously varied careers of our alums to shine. That's why the Faces of Change project will be raising funds to expand the Faculty's photo collection, highlighting the unique achievements of McGill's more recent grads.

Nous souhaitons encourager les étudiants et les étudiantes à imaginer leur avenir de manière créative en mettant en lumière les réalisations remarquables de certains de nos récents diplômés œuvrant dans divers domaines, dont la fonction publique, le monde des affaires, la direction de prestigieux organismes internationaux et l'amélioration de l'accès à la justice pour tous. Les photos et plaques additionnelles constitueront une source d'inspiration pour les étudiants aujourd'hui et pour les années à venir, rehausseront la beauté des lieux et insuffleront une énergie nouvelle à la Faculté.

Cette initiative présente de nombreux avantages pour l'ensemble de la Faculté :

- elle inspire les étudiants en leur montrant la voie exceptionnelle empruntée par certains de nos récents diplômés;
 - elle donne le sentiment aux étudiants qu'ils auront la capacité d'atteindre des objectifs ambitieux tout au long de leur carrière;
 - elle rend hommage au solide héritage de la Faculté, tout en célébrant son évolution et ses plus récentes réalisations.
- You can help Law students connect with the motivating stories of more recent grads by supporting the Faces of Change project in any capacity. Your donations will have a real impact.

The Faces of Change Committee includes Eloïse Gagné, Nicholas Choinière, Laura Rhodes, Michèle Lamarre-Leroux, Farid Muttalib, and Leslie Ning. For more information please contact the committee members or the Faculty's Director of Development, Nataalka Haras, at nataalka.haras@mcgill.ca

Please stay tuned for the launch of the Faces of Change crowdfunding site!

REFERENDUM QUESTION

RE: MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING BY BARREAU

Whereas mental health is a serious issue which affects many law students;

Whereas mental health is widely stigmatized and past prejudices harmfully linked mental health conditions to criminality and to moral turpitude;

Whereas seeking therapy can be an important part of addressing mental health issues;

Whereas the Barreau du Québec requires applicants to provide broad details about their mental health including any treatment and any past psychiatric orders;

Whereas forcing applicants to the Quebec Bar to disclose their mental health issues violates their right to privacy and provides an incentive to stop their treatment to avoid self-reporting;

Whereas Law Societies in Alberta and Nova Scotia have long asked applicants only to identify mental health conditions which are relevant to their practice of law, and jurisdictions such as Ontario and Saskatchewan have long asked applicants no mental health questions at all;

Whereas article 17 of the Charter of human rights and freedoms provides that "[n]o one may practice discrimination in respect of the admission ... of a person to ... any professional order" and article 10 provides that "handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap" is a prohibited ground of discrimination, which courts have held includes any mental health conditions or addiction;

Whereas "there is no evidence linking the presence (or absence) of mental health impairments to individuals' professional skills or abilities" and some studies have shown "a higher incidence of disciplinary problems among lawyers with no history of mental disability than among lawyers who experienced mental health problems in the past";

We, the undersigned, ask that the following question be submitted to a referendum;

We, the McGill Law student body, ask the Comité d'accès à la profession, the Barreau du Québec and the École du Barreau to review their policy requiring applicants to disclose their mental health issues and their relationship with mental health professionals.

Josselyn, Sara. "Bar Mental Fitness Questions: Perpetuating the Stigma" (2007) 16 Dalhousie J Legal Stud 85 at 99, 88.

ANONYMOUS

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

Looking back, I've probably had some form of mild depression since I was 14. It affected me quite a bit when I was a teenager but, since my last few years in high school, I'd say it was an excuse to bury myself in school work and extra-curriculars and basically block out any thoughts that bothered me. That served its purpose I guess, since working hard allowed me to make it so far as getting into law school—a form of success according to most people I know. So here I was: successful, unhappy me. After starting law school though, things got worse. I'd buried everything under the carpet for so long that the lump was getting way too big and I was tripping over it. My workaholic pattern was failing me and I just couldn't get things done as efficiently as I could before and had trouble keeping up with deadlines. I often had big mood swings and got upset over the smallest things and would break down more and more often. It was tough and it was getting even tougher to hide.

I operated under the assumption that having a mental health issue / condition was a form of weakness and that I probably just wasn't a strong person and would always have trouble getting through life. This assumption was only reinforced in my head by an environment like law school that often attracts high-performing individuals who usually focus on output rather than taking care of themselves. Don't get me wrong, people are great, I love my class—unfortunately that doesn't change the pressure we're all under. The workload is a mystery to no one, readings accumulate, exams are stressful, grades are lower than we're used to, job-searching / courses aux stages / OCIs all send the same message to me: sink or swim! That, and we're told from day one (in case we didn't already know this) that we're some of the privileged few and should be thankful to be here. I always felt guilty when I complained about law school because I felt like I should be more grateful for the opportunity. Thankfully some (but not enough) people were / are saying, «Look, this is a competitive environment, but you gotta take care of yourself and your friends around you. We're all in this together!» The people that are saying it are unfortunately drowned out by the overwhelming message that you just gotta put in the work if you're gonna get anywhere and, by implication, not have enough time to address your personal issues if any already exist OR if any develop from the pressure we're under.

I talked to a few friends, but couldn't shake off the feeling that I was an exception and that most people were handling law school better than I was. I sought help and reached out to the mental health unit on lower campus. The more I went, the more I ran into people I knew from the Faculty and the more I heard that law students made up a large proportion of students going to the unit.

This really surprised me.

I never thought so many people were struggling with mental health issues at the Faculty. The more I thought about it though, the more this made sense to me. I wasn't an exception in thinking I was an exception. Lots of people fear the judgment of their friends and family and no one likes to appear weak, so we all shut up and deal with our issues «independently» (if at all). While this is an important step that many don't even get as far as taking, I think it doesn't go far enough to address the mistaken assumption that showing signs of mental health issues is a weakness. Let's all acknowledge how ridiculous this is. After all, we DID make it this far and ARE successful people with promising careers ahead of us (if not already ongoing). I'm pretty sure most of our friends and families outside law wouldn't describe us as «weak». What does this say about mental health? It can and does affect everybody, indiscriminately of gender, class, race, professional / academic success. It is not weakness. As far as law is concerned, I think it is a symptom that law school and the legal profession more generally is not (yet) good at taking care of its participants. It doesn't have to be that way. We all make up this Faculty and will eventually become practitioners in this profession. Administrators, profs, you already are part of this profession. We have a say in how we want to take care of ourselves. Let's reach out to people we trust if we're feeling low and especially if it's been going on for a while, and let's also be better listeners to people around us in need of a friend. Feeling supported by my friends and family was possibly the biggest assurance that things were going to get better. I still have some low boiling points, but I'm doing a lot better than I was and I can't stress how important it's been to talk about it with people I trust and not keep it to myself. After all, we're all in this together. Est-ce que les questions de santé mentale vous intéressent?

Apply for a legal clinic placement at the Douglas Institute or the Portage Detox Centre during the next round of recruitment!

Dates & details coming soon...

dfs

ANONYMOUS

STRUGGLES FOR THE MOST PART INTERNAL

As someone who has suffered from depression, anxiety, and who has been recently diagnosed with ADHD I thought I might write about my experiences at the Faculty.

First, a bit of background. Eight years ago I received my first diagnosis of depression. I took anti-depressants and was followed by a psychologist for a short time. I eventually got off the meds and managed to turn my life around. However, just because I got off the meds didn't mean my issues went away. They are something that I have struggled with my entire life and I imagine I will continue to struggle with them until the day that I die.

These struggles are for the most part internal and I tell very few people about them. Part of the reluctance is that I am a deeply private individual. However, most of the reluctance stems from fear of judgment. My time at the Faculty has taught me one thing very clearly—the legal world is small and word of mouth travels quickly. In a world where your peers' perception of your competence matters enormously, the social stigma attached to suffering from a mental health issue may derail a promising legal career.

I believe I have done well to keep it on the down low. I recently filled out the Quebec Bar's dreadful entrance questionnaire. It asked me to disclose whether I suffered from any mental illness that might affect my ability to practice. This I kind of understood. More problematically, I was asked if I was seeing any mental health professional. If so (no matter for what, or who I was seeing), I was to produce a note attesting to the nature of the problem and its expected duration. This is deeply invasive. Having no knowledge why this information was required I faced several unpalatable choices.

First, I could refuse to answer. This would preclude me from entrance into Bar School. Next, I could sue the Barreau, claiming that my right to privacy was infringed. This would put me, a young lawyer, in direct conflict with the gatekeepers to the profession, and attract immediate attention. Next, I could lie. This could lead to my potential disbarment one day. Lastly, I could submit. This would be deeply invasive.

I won't disclose which option I chose. Needless to say, they were all losing options. The only way to have avoided this question was to NOT seek therapy in the past 12 months and therefore put myself outside the ambit of the question. I invite you to ponder the consequences of that thought for a moment.

However, that has been just my latest struggle in the Faculty. My stay at the faculty of Law has not been an easy one. My peers are

wonderful people and I am deeply appreciative of the friendships and connections that I have made. However, the Faculty can foster great stress and anxiety. From the first month, we are thrown into the first of our many competitions: applications to become editors of the student-led journals. Then, we start worrying about mid-terms.

Then, they announce applications for the fabled McGill Law Journal. Then, we start stressing about summer jobs. Then, we stress about exams. Then, we start to stress about 2L. Have we cultivated enough relationships with our profs to secure reference letters? Should we volunteer at the Legal Clinic? Are my grades good enough to permit me to do X, Y, Z? Did I do well enough at my Moot trials? Will I get a clerkship?

Obviously, not everyone shares the same goals and these concerns are not universal. However, it is undeniable that the constant atmosphere of competition can take a toll on the psyche. It certainly has on me.

I first sought help for depression at McGill Mental Health in November of 1L. It took 3 months to get an appointment to see someone. I was "fortunate" enough to "qualify" as someone who required weekly visits. I have known people to wait 2 semesters before being given regular appointments. This has only gotten worse as McGill's financial woes have increased. This year, students only have the right to 12 consultations per year. This means that I can only see my therapist every 2 weeks.

Throughout my three years at McGill, I have missed countless opportunities to see friends and partake in activities that interest me due to my mental health issues. There have been nights when I was too depressed to leave the house. There have been many occasions in which I have cancelled plans with friends because I was too "busy" to hang out. In reality, I was incredibly overwhelmed and simply could not cope. I could not concentrate on the readings and could not get motivated. As a result, I would come to blame myself for being a failure. This simply fed my depression.

Things came to a head this year. My inability to cope with school and its stress had begun to destroy my relationship with my partner. I had come to resent law school for ruining my life. I went to a psychiatrist and was given a prescription for anti-depressants. At the same time, the psychiatrist suggested upon hearing my complaints that I undergo a test for ADHD.

One of the primary obstacles facing those with mental health issues is that of accessibility of care. The cheapest test for ADHD

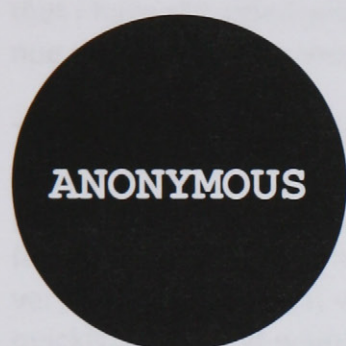
that I could find was through a private psychologist for \$1200. My local CLSC told me that the waiting list was a minimum of 6 months, given my history of depression. For someone with no previous problems, it could be well over 2 years. I had no choice—I had to pay \$1200 and further increase my student debt.

The results came back with a diagnosis of ADHD – “combined”. There are two types of ADHD described in the DSM—impulsive and inattention—I had both. I had never been more relieved at receiving a diagnosis in my life. It felt like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I have spent years blaming myself and feeling worthless because I cannot concentrate and focus on simple tasks. I hated that I was disorganized and could not remember simple things.

I have been prescribed medication and it has already helped

immensely. I have finally tackled simple things that I have been delaying for months on end. I am beginning to pay attention to my finances. I have begun to repair the deep damage my issues have caused to my relationship with my partner.

In closing, I am thankful to the great work that the Student Well Being Committee is doing. Creating a space for debate surrounding mental health issues is an important step towards ensuring that the Faculty becomes a safe space for students suffering from mental health problems. It is my hope that one day I will feel free to discuss my issues with the same aplomb that people discuss things like a sprained ankle or even, god forbid, their latest bout of gastro.



GARDER L'ESPRIT OUVERT

J'ai toujours été perfectionniste, je faisais tout qui était nécessaire pour avoir de bons résultats. On me disait que j'étais stressée, mais je me suis dit que c'était un trait de personnalité, vu comme une qualité dans certains cas. J'ai toujours eu des horaires chargés, plusieurs responsabilités, et je ne reculai pas d'aucun défi qui se présentait à moi. Une petite voix dans ma tête arrivait à me rassurer, à me dire que j'étais capable, que tout allait bien être. Jusqu'ici, je pense que beaucoup de mes collègues se retrouvent. Cependant, il est arrivé un moment où cette petite voix ne semblait plus marcher. Je répétais constamment: « C'est quoi le pire qui pourrait arriver, couler l'examen? » ou « Tu réussisse toujours à la fin de la journée, pourquoi cette fois-ci serait-elle différent? » Mon cerveau ne transmettait pas le message à mon corps. Au lieu de prendre mon courage à deux mains et de me rendre de pied ferme à l'entrevue, l'oral ou l'examen comme je l'avais toujours fait, ma crainte prenait charge. My hands would numb, I'd start having trouble breathing, my stomach would feel awful, and I would have to rush to a bathroom stall to be alone and breathe it out. Nothing really helped, except at some point I told myself that if I didn't get up and go, my fear of failing would definitely come true, which felt really ironic. The worst part is I had sudden stomach flu –to put it nicely- and in all of these stressful events I wasn't allowed to go to the bathroom at all. The fear went from failing to shitting my pants in front of the whole class. I felt like it was the ultimate loss of control: a tragedy for the control freak that I am. Whenever I tell this to people now, I find it quite funny, but at the time it wasn't a joking matter. I was so ashamed; I didn't tell anyone for at least 6 months. That's when I told my family about my physical problems, but I didn't mention the cir-

cumstances surrounding them. I then had to meet with several physicians who- of course- didn't find anything wrong with me. At last a gastroenterologist pronounced the following word, which I had never heard before, « psychosomatic ».

Ce terme compliqué est en fait assez simple. C'est quand des causes purement psychologiques provoquent des symptômes physiques, comme mes maux de ventre. J'avais enfin un peu d'éclairage sur mes problèmes gênants, mais le diagnostic posé, reste encore le remède. C'est là qu'on a de la difficulté. J'ai commencé à consulter un psychologue à chaque semaine, à fouiller dans mon passé qu'est ce qui aurait pu être les causes de ce que je pouvais maintenant appeler mon anxiété. Je suis déménagée de chez moi, fait des séances de respiration avec un spécialiste, commencé à faire plus de sport... Rien à faire. En plus, essayez d'expliquer à votre famille où la maladie mentale est une excuse pour les symptômes que vous en souffrez. Ce n'est pas une mince tâche. Mes parents étaient farouchement opposés, je le savais depuis mon enfance, au recours « inutile » à la médication, qui n'était qu'un échappatoire au « vrai travail ». J'étais donc prise dans une impasse, et j'avais décidé d'agir dans le plus grand secret pour me procurer des médicaments. (C'est tout dire, alors que j'habitais encore à la maison familiale, je partais à 6hrs du matin en catimini (?) pour aller à une clinique sans rendez-vous loin de chez moi... Pour ensuite dire à ma mère que je n'arrivais pas à dormir et que j'étais sortie aller m'entraîner – moi qui n'est aucunement matinale...)

I held on to the pills for 2 weeks before deciding to take them,

still haunted by my parents' opinion. I finally decided to take one, then two, and then one. It didn't make a great difference. I had less panic attacks, and felt like I could tackle the year to come. I still had my ups and downs, nor did I feel numb or in the clouds as the doctor had warned. I felt more stable, not always on the verge of breaking down. I still have major crises, feel overwhelmed by the work that I have to do, still need to continue psychotherapy (which I made the mistake to stop by lack of time – another irony), but globally I'd say my life is no longer dominated by my anxiety. I'm now living with anxiety.

Une année plus tard, me voilà à McGill, à jongler entre lectures, travaux, bénévolat, travail. Un jour, je reçois un appel de mes parents, étonnamment assez stoïques : mon frère de 14 ans était hospitalisé pour une dépression majeure. Je me mets à paniquer, à me demander comment je n'ai rien pu voir, à me dire que j'aurais dû être plus présente... Mais surtout, surtout, je me dis que je veux être là pour faciliter le chemin à venir que je savais ardu. Sans comparer mes problèmes aux siens, je savais comment ma famille était maladroite dans des situations similaires, et je voulais qu'il se sentait le mieux possible de nous en parler afin qu'on puisse trouver des solutions. 2 hospitalisations et 3 médicaments plus tard, il était de retour à l'école et fonctionnel – un grand pas par rapport à l'état de détresse dans lequel il se trouvait parfois. Je ne sais pas à ce jour ce qui peut pousser un enfant si jeune à la dépression- phénomène de plus en plus fréquent d'ailleurs- mais je trouve cela très inquiétant. D'autant plus que la maladie mentale n'est pas un sujet facile à aborder et plusieurs préfèrent

garder cela pour eux plutôt que de chercher de l'aide. Je ne peux pas imaginer les conséquences à long terme si mon frère avait gardé tout ça pour lui, ce qui est également récurrent chez les jeunes. Ma famille a malgré elle dû se faire à l'idée que l'anxiété ou la dépression n'étaient pas des inventions. Que la médication était parfois nécessaire pour être capable de vivre au quotidien. Mais je crois que de grands pas restent encore à faire.

La raison pour laquelle j'écris ce texte n'est pas pour générer de la pitié, mais bien pour faire réaliser que la maladie mentale est partout, et qu'il faut s'en parler. Les tabous l'entourant sont non seulement infondés mais contribuent à stigmatiser les malades et de les isoler dans leur souffrance. Pour ma part, j'essaie d'en parler le plus possible et de rendre ça normal et même banal, au même titre qu'une fracture ou une pneumonie. Personne ne choisit de souffrir de dépression, d'anxiété ou de quelconque problème de santé mentale. La première étape de toute guérison est de reconnaître le problème et de demander de l'aide, ce qui est difficile dans le contexte actuel – malgré une amélioration constante. Les gens affectés ne sont pas fous, ne se cherchent pas des excuses et n'ont pas recours à des médicaments pour rien. En parler ne fera pas de mal à personne, sinon du bien. Gardez l'esprit ouvert, soyez à l'écoute, et surtout, si vous ressentez un malaise quelconque, n'hésitez pas à en parler. Je sais d'expérience que de tout garder pour soi empire les choses, et que plus de personnes qu'on ne pense ont vécu ou vivent la même chose.

ANONYMOUS

LEARNING TO MANAGE AND CULTIVATE MENTAL HEALTH

I'll never forget the first time I made myself throw up. I was 16 and had just eaten an ice cream cone. I was in high school and had been given a lead role at a small dance company. It would be my first time spending the majority of my time on stage being lifted and tossed around by someone else. I was, I told myself, trying to be considerate.

When I stopped dancing I continued throwing up. I ate normally - I wasn't a binger. I threw up for stress relief: a literal and metaphorical purging; my own secret key to relieving the butterflies. A sense of control came with knowing I could use this 'tool' to manage anxiety while appearing 'normal' to the outside world. No one suspected. Or at least no one ever mentioned any concern to me. Meanwhile, I was throwing up after nearly every meal. I developed calluses on my hands where they rubbed my teeth. It was a horrified roommate who found me throwing up that helped

me to stop.

My struggles with eating did not begin in law school, but they did resurface here. I knew stress was a trigger for me, so in first year I was cautious. I asked people close to me for support in finding ways to keep myself well-fed. Healthy. With that year behind me, I thought I was through "the worst of it".

2L was another story. It had been five years since my last "incident" when I found myself in the bathroom of Old Chancellor Day Hall throwing up some nibbly-little-law-firm-bite I had eaten at Coffee House. Back was the sense of control: 'control' of my public persona in the Atrium and 'control' of myself alone in a bathroom stall. Back was the sense of having a secret tool: I could say I was handling the stress of law school just fine, thank you, and could deal with the difficulties alone. I didn't tell anyone that

mooting made me feel like throwing up – I just did it.

As the year progressed, I stopped throwing up because I stopped eating. I ran out of the house in the morning – no time for breakfast. Whoops! Didn't pack a lunch either... By the time I got home at night, toast and top ramen were all I had energy to make. My counselor at the Brown Building was flabbergasted when I casually mentioned I didn't have time to eat. Imagine his surprise when I told him a number of my classmates said the same. I told him about the Quid article "Law School With an Eating Disorder" which had struck a deep chord with me. (attached)

My counselor helped me consider how my behaviour flowed from isolation and secret-keeping. Eating disorders, it turns out, aren't all that different from addiction in this respect. But how to come out of the bathroom stall? I didn't join a support group (too sappy), write an article (too public) or start talking to my friends about throwing up (too embarrassing). I did start sharing my stress. I also stopped going to events that I found stressful – I avoided Coffee House religiously. I re-engaged with the people who had supported me in 1L. I'm doing better, but I still struggle.

Law school did not create a mental health crisis in my life. It did play on weaknesses I already had: competitiveness, self-importance, insecurity, a tendency to overwork. I'm not sure things would have been different had I chosen to be an engineer, a mother or any number of other things. My mental health struggle has been cyclical. I anticipate it will follow me down whatever

path I end up taking.

So for me, law school is just another beginning: more challenges, disappointments and rivalries will be waiting wherever I choose to go. What I have learned—cheesy as it sounds—is that there is no glory in keeping this secret. As I've come to talk about my stress, I'm amazed at how many people who I thought had it 'together' are also hiding their own secret 'tools'. I have also learned the importance of observing my own behaviour and not waiting for someone else to notice things are going wrong. Missing a meal here or there is not the end of the world – certainly no one else will notice. But for me, it is a signal that life is starting to get out of hand.

I hope my story helps to illustrate what I believe: that while law school may be just one piece of the mental health puzzle, it is an important time for us to take whatever baggage we already have and move forward. I hope the Faculty recognizes the important role it can play in preparing us to deal with stressful situations not just as professionals helping others, but also as people trying to take care of ourselves. I hope that as a community we will focus on learning to manage and cultivate mental health rather than thinking we can or should be above all struggle. I hope we will focus on being as careful and kind to ourselves as we are encouraged to be to each other.

ANONYMOUS

TO MY FELLOW MADFOLK

You can ask to borrow my notes from Tuesday. And you can even tell me the reason that you missed class is that "you weren't feeling well." Because I get what that means. I get the sadness; what it means to silently cry in the 4th floor library washroom because maybe Tuesday is just too much to handle. I understand how moments can manage to stretch out over days; days in which you are incapable of leaving the house, or maybe even your bed.

I get what it means to wrestle with an integral part of yourself. It means navigating a series of shitty coping mechanisms in your attempt at dealing with stress – picking or cutting or vomiting or fucking or stealing. It means suffering incorrect diagnoses, and manias perpetuated by the wrong guess at a medication. It means 3 suicide attempts, 2 involuntary psychiatric holds, and a countless number of doctors' offices.

It means leaving your house in a panic, and walking for

over two hours in a daze before eventually being picked up by police for trying to wedge yourself under the bars of the Champlain bridge. It means being high functioning and manipulative enough to be able to convince them that you were "really just here for the view!"

It means a lot of hiding, volatility, self-directed anger, sadness, and shame. It means a lot of shame.

But it also means hope.

Because one day, something's gonna click. You are going to keep fighting, and pushing, and blindly thrashing through the darkness. And you're going to get through. I promise.

It took me until I was 21 years old to find the right diagnosis; a personality disorder with co-morbid depression. It took another year to find the right treatment: an intensive dialectical behaviour

ral therapy treatment program at the Allen Memorial Institute. It took another 2 years to find the right medication: 450 mg of moclobomide, a MAOI. By the age of 24, I had found a stability and happiness I never thought possible.

The good days started to outnumber the bad. All the strength and drive I had previously put into simply getting by finally had traction – external structures of support to latch onto, and I started to thrive.

And you will again too. Madfolk have got moxie.

You'll take stock of small victories. You'll shower, or brush your teeth. Maybe you'll take a 10 minute walk or even get to the gym! You'll manage to cook yourself a meal, or meditate, or drink a cup

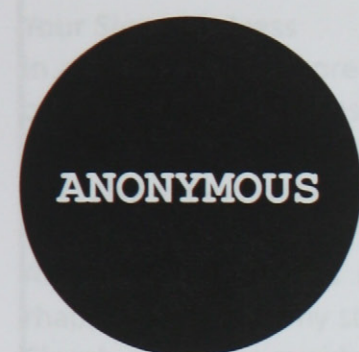
of tea. You'll talk to a friend, and reach out for support.

You will be kind to yourself.

Don't be fooled. You are surrounded by people in this faculty. People who have also gotten really good at hiding. People with parallel narratives that are just as brilliant and wonderful and fucked-up as you are.

And one day, you will peace find peace and learn to appreciate everything that you are (I know I did).

And until you do, I will continue to share my notes from Tuesday's class with you. Because you are not alone in your struggle.



A SUCCESSFUL MCGILL LAW STUDENT

I am, by most measures, a successful McGill law student. I'm involved in the life of the faculty. I get good grades in my courses. I'm even on my way to a good job when I graduate.

But behind this façade of success lie serious mental health problems. I don't know how long I've been unwell. I only sought help quite recently. By then, the diagnoses were no surprise to me, but it still stings. Anxiety disorders. Bulimia Nervosa. Isn't that only supposed to happen to teenage girls?

I wish I could say I was in recovery, since I've taken the step to ask for help, but I know that I'm not improving yet. I still spend my days obsessing over food and my body. Often, instead of listening in lecture, I'm thinking about what I'm going to eat next (maybe celery and tea will keep me satisfied?) or how I must look to the people around me (if I sit just this way, maybe I won't look so fat).

I still rejoice when the number on the scale or the measuring tape decreases. I still measure success not by how well but by how little I eat in a day. When my resolve in starving myself fails – and it almost inevitably does – I eat until I'm uncomfortable. Then I make myself vomit. This is not as easy as you might think. But it is at least as unpleasant, and it takes longer than I would ever have imagined. I do it anyway, almost every day.

I have missed sleep to meet deadlines because I spent what should have been my productive time hunched over the toilet. I

often can't think clearly, the way I did to get into McGill Law and succeed once I was here.

I panic when I am expected to eat a normal meal with others. I am literally afraid of eating certain foods. I can barely remember the last normal meal I had on my own.

What I do is disgusting, and it is dangerous. It is preventing me from enjoying my life, and it is almost definitely shortening it. I remind myself of these things constantly. And yet I cannot stop. That is the experience of an eating disorder.

It made me intensely uncomfortable to write this, and maybe it's uncomfortable to read. It is not that the details of my struggle are in themselves important; but this represents, mutatis mutandis, the reality for an untold number of students struggling with different kinds of mental health problems at this Faculty. All are silenced by stigma, prevented from seeking accommodations (formal or informal) to make this a safer space. I can't ask people to avoid triggering topics of conversation around me. I can't do anything but awkwardly sidestep questions about my weight.

The Faculty is not a good environment for recovery from mental health problems. The causes are probably societal and can't be attributed to the students, faculty, and staff actually here. But we still need to fix this. I have no idea how.

LÀ
OÙ
VOUS
ÊTES.^{MD}



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AARON
FERGIE

Year II

ON STRESS

Basic Notions

"Stress" may be defined as anything that puts pressure on us, draining our physical or mental resources. "Stress" may also be defined as a person's response to such pressures. I refer to stress here in both senses.

Healthy Stress

Stress, in itself, is neither healthy nor unhealthy. Some stress before an exam, for instance, can keep us alert. It can push us to work harder to overcome challenges, and is a natural part of any exertion.

Unhealthy Stress

Stress becomes a problem when you find that you are no longer able to function properly. It can cause shortness of breath, anxiety, and may disrupt concentration or information retention. Prolonged stress can reduce your immune system, and perhaps even result in depression.

Listening to Stress

I believe the key to managing stress is learning first how to listen to it. In this way, stress is like pain. Pain is unpleasant, and for that it gets a bad rap. But pain is the body's way of telling us that something is wrong and where the problem lies. If you feel

a sharp pain in your abdomen, this might help a doctor locate a case of appendicitis or gallstones. If you feel pain in your lymph nodes, it can indicate that your immune system is fighting off an illness, and you should get some rest.

Like pain, I believe stress has a lot to tell us about what's not working in our lives, and where we can look for solutions. Notice that there are two steps to this listening to stress: (1) Attending; (2) Understanding.

Attending to Your Stress

Learn what your stress behaviours are, and try to develop a sense of timely self-awareness when they arise. Often our responses to stress are subtle. Perhaps the most important stress behaviours to attend to are those that arise when you feel you should be doing something else.

Your Signs of stress

In addition to the more obvious general symptoms of stress discussed above (shortness of breath, anxiety, inability to concentrate or retain information, sickness, depression), each person may also exhibit different, more subtle stress-related behaviours.

Avoidance behaviours are very common among students, perhaps the reason why students are notorious for procrastination. Closely related to avoidance is pleasure-seeking. Pleasure-seeking arises when we try to resolve our stress by seeking some kind of pleasure. This could be anything from simple internet browsing, snacking, or coffee, to more serious things like alcohol or drug use.

You'll notice that avoidance and pleasure-seeking often come hand-in-hand. Also, neither of them actually resolve the true source of the stress.

Once you learn how to recognize your early warning signs—before you get sick, or lose a few days of productivity—you'll know that something is wrong. Even better, the specific pleasure-seeking or avoidance behaviours can actually indicate what exactly is causing your stress.

Understanding Your Stress

In my own life, I have discovered 3 major sources of stress, which I suspect are fairly common among law school students.

I. Fatigue and Saturation

The simplest cause of stress is fatigue. In my case, I tend to experience fatigue-related stress on my most jam-packed days of class or after missing sleep. The main sign of fatigue for me is mindless internet browsing. If I've sat in front of the computer and unreflectively done nothing for 15-30 minutes (especially on a busy day) despite my intentions to study, that can indicate fatigue-related stress. Also, when I start to get really tired, my expressions change (people often remark that I look angry even when I feel neutral), and when I'm flat-out exhausted I feel more sensitive and irritable. The solution to fatigue is straight-forward enough: get some good-quality sleep!

Related to fatigue is what I call "saturation". It's like fatigue but in relation only to a specific activity. Saturation happens when we do the same thing for too long. In terms of schoolwork, a kind of short-term saturation occurs for me after about 45 minutes of reading, when I need to take a break and clear my mind. I also experience saturation when I've been studying the same subject for several hours. The clearest sign of saturation for me is that I no longer seem able to discern what is important and what is not in what I'm studying; everything sort of blurs together. The solution to saturation is not necessarily sleep, but rather to simply change what you're doing. The best response to saturation is usually to do something productive in lieu, e.g., house chores, exercising, or other schoolwork.

II. Lack of Resources/Training

Sometimes, however, stress remains even after a good sleep and balanced activities. In these cases, I suspect the most common source of stress is simply lack of training. In fact, every novel situation generates some level of stress, and we run the risk of feeling a little overwhelmed. I believe this is why students in particular, and especially law students among them, probably have so many stress-related concerns. We are in the process of learning a craft, so literally everything we do will be novel to us in some way.

Furthermore, a big part of being a lawyer is learning how to make uncertainty tractable and how to make decisions in the face of it. In my case, I knew a lot less about being a student than I thought I did. I thought I knew how to use Word, but I didn't know the first thing about macros or styles. I thought I knew how to write papers before coming into law school, but I didn't have any method. I thought I knew how to read and understand new information, without understanding the different stages the mind passes through while doing so, and how to structure my learning around those natural processes.

Solution 1: Humility

The first step to developing new skills is to be humble in accepting your limitations. As long as you keep telling yourself you should know how to proceed, you'll never invest the time it takes into actually learning how to proceed. In my case, I've found that there is no big secret to success at law school; I've cut down almost all of my extra-curricular activities and taken the smallest course load I can so that I can focus on my studies and I've found the quality of my understanding, work, and life have seen a tremendous improvement. But it took almost 2 years for me to swallow my pride, and in a lot of ways I'm still having trouble choking it down!

Solution 2: Finding Resources

That said, humility is only a step in the right direction. You need to figure out what to do! I've found books useful (especially *Getting to Maybe*, *The Bramble Bush*, *Legal Writing in Plain English*, and even *Holmes' The Path of The Law*) for law school technique. For stress management they have some great, concise little pamphlets at the Brown Building, as well as consultation with a life coach (Valerie Legge) to be helpful. Of course, there were also a lot of personal reflection and checking for resources online, as

well as discussions with colleagues and professors.

Solution 3: Make the Problem Tractable by Breaking it Down

Often we do not need to go out and seek specialized knowledge. Instead, we may have the background knowledge already, but have difficulty putting it into practice. In these cases, the best thing to do is to try and break the problem down into the smallest steps possible and to focus only on the next step. There were moments when, in my greatest frustration, I had to break studying down even to lifting a finger. But it works, and can help stimulate you to action.

III. Habits of Mind

Lastly, despite my best preparations and efforts you may still sometimes find yourself paralyzed, in one way or another, by stress. In these cases, I have found these "last resort" tools helpful (N.B. they are organized below roughly in terms of priority):

Breathe!

Deep, measured breaths. That is, a 4 count in, 2 count hold, 8 count out, a minimum of 18 times; apparently it takes about 4 minutes to refresh the oxygen in the blood which can get depleted when we are stationary (e.g., reading). Oxygen depletion is actually a source of physical stress, and can compound the difficulties dealing with other sorts of stress. Especially since we tend to take shorter breaths when stressed. If you have a healthy exercise regime and stretch, this can also greatly help. While breathing, I usually try to clear my mind, but I have found that visual relaxation techniques can help too.

Act!

Sometimes, just doing something, anything, in the direction of what you need to do can help to break a log jam. It's not always a good idea to just jump into things, but when the problem is paralysis by analysis, it may be just what you need.

Struggle!

Sometimes, dealing with anxiety can be a battle. It can take a bit of endurance, but sometimes you just need to ride it out. In these cases, I remind myself that resistance, especially when it is most painful, usually precedes success. A bit of willpower is sometimes all it takes to keep concentrating and keep moving forward. But

I'm not convinced that willpower is a real replacement for self-compassion and a balanced life!

Harm Reduction

If, despite your best efforts, you find concentrating impossible, then measured resistance may be the key. You may find it difficult, for instance, to hold off on the snacking, or internet, or whatever. The trick is to try to hold clearly in your mind what you think you should be doing, and to find ways to minimize the impacts of avoidance/pleasure-seeking behaviours. Instead of snacking on chocolate, for instance, you may keep fruits at hand at all times. Instead of checking anything on the internet, try to be productive by answering e-mails or reading up on news sites instead. Instead of video games, you might be able to step down to reading quality literature. You might also use this time to do some chores. Then, try to set limits (e.g., timed 5 minute break). You can keep doing this until you actually have some pretty health habits! The idea is about always trying to find ways to reduce the harm of maladaptive habits, and about always taking small steps in the direction we want to go.

Self-Compassion

No matter what, I have found that self-blame almost never works. Berating yourself for not getting things done may work in the short-term, but it is not a sustainable, long-term solution to stress. In fact, you'll probably continue failing to get things done, and lose all your self-confidence while you're at it. Instead, try to see all your efforts as an investment in your long-term success.

Hope it helps!

N.B. This article is a hodge-podge of knowledge I've discovered along the way through law school and largely represents my own approach to stress management. That said, it may not work for everyone, so if you are really struggling and need help, by all means find a professional who can help you out rather than trying to work it out on your own!

JOSH
CROWE

Year 1

STORY TIME IN THE AGE OF LABELS-AND-PILLS

The mental health profession is churning out labels faster than Tongraf and Snorlax can throw down a rhyme. The new DSM (5th ed) has added to a growing list of disorders. It is thus doing its part to satisfy the professional (and popular) fetish to diagnose.

Yet, diagnoses do very little to help us understand a person. In fact, the diagnosis can hinder our understanding if we allow it to impose itself with such force on our perception of a person's identity that it overshadows the human under the diagnosis. Consider that it has become commonplace to hear the phrase, 'they must be off their meds', to describe a person, diagnosed with a mental illness, who acts erratically or emotively. Alas, we souls, indoctrinated by a labels-and-pills medical culture, might unwittingly have been led to believe that some people behave completely in thrall to illness. What does this say about the rest of us?

Luckily, we have stories, and they can help us to focus on the human and push the label to the background. Stories also helps us to scrutinize the way we think about people, so that we come up with better ways to treat others in the future. Simply put, stories emancipate us from cold, manufactured label-thinking.

In defence of this premise, I offer you a story about a man I met and who I've called Chris. After the story, I discuss what I think I learned from Chris.

MEET CHRIS

I know a story about a man who is said to be schizophrenic, call him Chris. I won't tell you all of the story, but I'd like to tell you about how we met.

It was in March. I worked for a social housing agency at a job that I roughly – and pejoratively - describe as 'the guy who maintenance workers and security guards call when something doesn't fit the job description'.

On the day I met Chris, a maintenance worker in the apartment building where Chris lives was making rounds, checking thermostats in all the apartments. When he got into Chris' living room, he encountered a sight that most certainly didn't fit the job description. I got a call. Here's the message he left me:

"Holy crap, there's pigeons living in here and pigeon crap and feathers all over the place! The damn things are laying eggs!! This guy's nuts, I think he's schizo or something, must be off his meds. Get here quick!"

So I met Chris. Chris is six foot, seven inches tall and gaunt. His eyes are sunken and have deep bags under them. He's missing teeth. When we met he was unshaven and the skin around his scraggly beard glistened, oily. Hair fell unevenly and raggedly over

his forehead and it gave me the impression that he is accustomed to letting it grow until it encumbers his sight, at which point he uses a moderately sharp blade to remove the obstruction.

'Where is the blade?', I wondered.

I quickly understood that Chris collects bottles he picks up from the street and brings them into his apartment until he has enough for a few beer – it takes about 100 bottles. He doesn't clean them or stack them with any particular care, so they drip onto floor which, as a result, gets sticky with bottle dregs.

This means that his apartment is home to a number of cockroaches. They scurried here and there and very rudely gorged themselves on the sea of goo that surrounded our feet, apparently unaware of our presence. And yes, there were pigeons, and pigeon droppings, and feathers littering the entire floor. You can imagine the smell.

My objective was to get Chris to the hospital and back 'on his meds' so that he would eventually come to better senses about the pigeons and get rid of the mess. It seems common place these days that 'meds' are a magical panacea that can even take care of pigeon problems. This is absurd, though I must say that standing before this haggard man in his squalid apartment, I was tempted to believe there was an easy way out. Thankfully, I came to better senses.

'So you've -- you've got pigeons living with you'

'Ya - m- most of the time they stay on the balcony – it's n- not bad, you see. I'll ... well, I can ... if you want ... I'll sweep'

'You mean you like having the pigeons?'

It turns out Chris is a pigeon aficionado. He told me all about the different calls the pigeon makes. He showed me how the pigeons get defensive if you get too close to their eggs. The screeching sound, he said, is a warning.

To my dismay, he disagreed that apartments were not a natural habitat for the pigeon. He reminded me of the great diversity of pigeon species, including carrier pigeons which are kept in an aviary. Then challenged me to describe the pigeon's natural habitat.

Hmm.

We got to the point of the conversation when I told Chris the pigeons couldn't stay. I guess he thought he'd been winning his case up to that point because his countenance slackened and his gaze slumped straight to the ground.

"What... well, what are you thinking?"

He was silent.

A ...

Painfully

long...

Time.

Seconds, passed. Minutes. His face unfeeling, gaze absent. Thoughts of the blade were creeping back into my mind.

Then:

"I'll miss the concert they make in the morning –

They have a really nice coo in the morning. That's the only time the family is together, aside from that, they're pretty nasty with one another – like the father pigeon is constantly grabbing the baby's neck in his beak and throwing him out of the nest – Oh, but you can't take them now, no, not now, the baby can't fly and it'll only be a week before the baby can fly.... He can get away on his own when he can fly... But ... but... if you move them now, the parents will leave the baby.... and.... he'll die. No, you can't move them now..."

Chris cares a great deal about pigeons. He told me he first began to admire them during trips to the park with his mother. She would always bring some bread so they could feed the birds. Chris hated how the bigger seagulls would bully the pigeons and get all the bread for themselves, so he'd get close and drop the bread where only the pigeons could get it. He said those were some of the happier moments of his life.

Over the following months during subsequent visits with Chris I heard about some much less happy moments, especially around the time that his illness began to intermeddle in his thoughts. I also learned that his mother passed away and that he considered the pigeons to be the only living creatures that could keep him company.

Nevertheless, Chris eventually agreed to let the pigeons find a new home. (For those concerned, the fledgling learned to fly, and Chris' apartment is now much cleaner.) These days, Chris is content to visit with pigeons at a neighbourhood park like he used to do with his mom.

There are two things that Chris likes about that park. For one, there is a great amount of pigeons that go there, no doubt looking for a feed. There is also a bench that sits under a great big maple tree which provides a cool shade in the summer. I like to imagine Chris sitting there, under the shade of the great maple, feeding the pigeons, wondering about how they grew up and where they go when they are not with him.

Indulge me with your attention a little longer as I make a few remarks about this story.

When we first met Chris, the maintenance worker and I had the stupid first impression that the reason Chris invited pigeons into his apartment was illness. I hope the story led you to understand

that illness does not explain his love for pigeons or why he invited them into his home. Of course, the illness might explain his isolation and the devastated self-worth that made it possible for him to live in squalor, but it was a desire we all share that motivated his affinity for pigeons. For him, they provided comfort.

Yet, like many people do, I made the fallacious assumption that Chris' behaviour was insanity, pure and simple. I labeled him 'insane' and so dismissed him as irrational. Diagnosis made, cure: meds.

I think all of us have a tendency to make these kinds of assumptions. If we surrender too often to the assumptions, I think we can fall into some scary patterns of thinking. If you like, I've sketched out below a couple ways I think our thinking becomes disordered when we rely on assumptions.

First, a label, particularly one as devastating as schizophrenia, can lead us to assume we exercise legitimate authority over the person wearing the label. This type of thinking provided specious justification for the absurd notion that forcing Chris to take 'meds' was a commensurate response to the pigeons, and would magically solve the problem. Labeling Chris 'schizo' somehow invited the assumption of a right to command him, and to take drastic measures – hospitalization and forced medication – to sanction his behaviour. Yet, like most other people, Chris was able to find a way to reconcile his desire for companionship with the demands of his landlord.

Second, the label can impose a separateness among people, and so suggest that they have no ability to relate. When a person wears a label, the essence of which is alien to us, the person themselves may appear a bit alien. Bewildered as we were in the assumption of Chris' otherness (read, 'schizo'-ness), there appeared to be nothing else to do but get Chris to a doctor who could administer a drug and quell whatever possessed him. In other words, Chris did not appear worthy of the same dignity we might normally extend to others. Yet, after speaking with Chris, I found that we in fact had quite a few things in common. Once I got past our differences, I found that it was actually a pleasure to talk with him.

I like this story about Chris because it shows how easy it is to make wrong and frankly illogical assumptions about people. This is not a new revelation (students of anthropology and race theory might note some similarity with 'essentialism'). But the point is that sometimes it takes a good story to remind us of the errors we make in our thinking about people. At least, a story is a much more effective means to understand a person than is a label. Stories are warm, colourful, sad ... fill-in-your-adjective. What I mean is they arrive at a much closer representation of humanity than do labels and pills. Keep telling stories.

**KATE
GODDARD**

BENJAMIN ISSUED AN APOLOGY BEFORE THE PUBLICATION OF THE FOLLOWING TWO OPEN LETTERS

DEAR BENJY

I'm writing an open letter, not just to you, but to everyone who was at skit night. To everyone who heard the joke that you can't rape a prostitute, because it's just shoplifting.

A good friend of mine was a sex worker for a while. I support his choice, both to do sex work and to stop when he wanted to. But that doesn't mean I wasn't terrified for him every time he went out. It didn't mean that I wasn't mentally rehearsing what I was going to say to his mother if he got raped or killed.

It certainly wasn't going to be that he was "shoplifted".

Most of us are familiar with the statistics. One in four women and one in five men will experience sexual assault in their lifetime.¹ For racialized and Indigenous women, members of the LGBTQ community or people with physical or cognitive disabilities, rates of sexual assault are even higher. The stats go on² – as do the assaults.

The problem here isn't that the Politically Correct Police are coming to restrict freedom of expression. The problem is the impact that joking has on others.

It has an impact on the survivors of sexual violence, who immediately have to think about what was likely one of the worst times in their lives.

It has an impact on those of us who have had close calls.

It has an impact on those of us who have had to help friends rebuild their lives after being assaulted, often multiple times.

And it has an impact on the people who commit rape. Joking

normalizes a problem, and shows that it's socially acceptable. It desensitizes a serious issue, and tells the people who rape that it's okay.

So why say it? Given that you're likely triggering incredibly painful memories for at least a quarter of the audience and you're telling the people who do horrible things that this is fine by you - the message I get is that you don't care about the impact what you say has on others.

I assume you don't want to encourage rapists.

I assume you're not going to go out and assault a sex worker because it isn't really rape.

I assume your goal wasn't making me uncomfortable enough to leave skit night early.

But what you are telling me is that if you were a lawyer, and my friend came to you after being assaulted, you wouldn't help him. Those who laughed at your joke told me the same thing.

And that's not the kind of colleague I want to be associated with.

This issue of the Quid is dedicated to mental health. Perhaps creating a faculty that feels safe for everyone is a place to start?

¹ <http://sacha.ca/fact-sheets/statistics>

² <http://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault/getting-the-facts/>

**DANIEL
RICHER**

DEAR BENJAMIN

After a year of seeing the glimmers of my classmates' creativity shining in the corners of Coffee-House and the odd party, it was wonderful to witness the concentration of creative talent that was Skit Nite Live. My enjoyment of the night was interrupted when you asked the crowd: "If I force myself on a prostitute, is

it rape or is it shoplifting?" The first time I heard this terrible attempt at a joke was on my elementary school playground. I didn't find it funny then. I find it disgusting now. Although I don't know you at all, I am writing you this letter and submitting it to the Quid Novi because I think the proper response to harmful comments

is a social one. You chose a public arena to share your joke. I'm choosing a public medium to respond.

Through my personal and professional interactions with women who have engaged in sex work, I have learned that, if there is choice involved in their decision to trade sex for money, goods, or services, it is often the choice of potentially being exposed to violence over a certainty of being exposed to violence. While not all sex workers have chosen to commodify their bodies out of such need, as a group, they are still far more likely to face rape and violence than the average person. Even in jest, characterizing the rape of sex workers as "shoplifting" perpetuates the idea that sex workers' bodies are available on the market as any other object and ignores their agency to decide when they will engage in sexual acts.

You weren't the only performer last night that tried to get a laugh at another's expense. However, I only take issue with your comment. Our colleagues' jokes were each targeted at discrete, well-identified people and were made with reasonable reliance on the good nature of their targets. Yours was at the expense of a vulnerable group whose facelessness is both a reason why so many jokes are made at their expense and a reason why they remain

so vulnerable.

I was not the only one upset by your comment as evidenced by the temporary pall it cast over the room. Luckily the other performances were fun, the levity of the night quickly returned, and the focus remained on the showcase of McGill Law talent. Yet, from conversations that I overheard today, I noticed that your comment was encouragingly not forgotten. It is a perverse culture we live in where jokes about rape are so commonplace that the likes of Martin Freeman (*The Hobbit*, *Sherlock*, *Love Actually*) can make them, as he did late last year, and very few people notice. Leaving "jokes" like this unchallenged simply continues to normalize the practice.

As evidenced by your decision to apologize to the audience, you became aware that your comment was not well received. Unfortunately, your haughty apology, directed at anyone who you "actually" offended, smacked of insincerity and seemed condemnatory to those of us who don't share your sense of humour. It is never okay to make jokes about rape and I can't accept an apology like that.

LORETTA SAUNDERS SCHOLARSHIP

MARCH 27TH - COFFEE, TEA, BAKED GOODS FOR THE LORETTA SAUNDERS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In the wake of the tragic and enraging murder of Loretta Saunders, a young Inuk woman studying at St. Mary's University, a scholarship fund is being set up in her name. Darryl Leroux, her supervisor for her thesis on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women, is matching any funds raised for the scholarship fund in March. Loretta was interested in studying law and criminology and to continue her work on Missing and Murdered Native Women. Venez aider à la création de la Bourse Loretta Saunders en achetant du café, du thé, et/ou des biscuits, gâteau, etc - jeudi le 27 mars dès 8h30 à 12h30 dans l'atrium. The Scholarship Fund will provide bursaries for indigenous women from Nunatsiavut, Loretta's home territory in northern Labrador and Mi'kma'ki, where Loretta went to university, in the Maritime provinces. Please consider making a donation in any amount, even if you cannot make the fundraiser. If you would like to make a donation outside the context of the March 27th bakesale, please get in touch with Lillian Boctor (lillianboctor@gmail.com).



NEW Database: Global Health and Human Rights Database

Last fall, Lawyers Collective and the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University in Washington DC have launched the Global Health and Human Rights Database. The Database is a fully searchable free online database of more than 1,000 judgments, constitutions and international instruments on the intersection between health and human rights. The Database is the first attempt to comprehensively make available health and human rights law from both common and civil law jurisdictions, and features case law and other legal documents from more than 80 countries and in 25 languages. It also provides 500 plain-language summaries and 200 original translations of case law previously unavailable in English.

To access the database, go: Law subject guide / Foreign legislation and cases / Human rights.

Air & Space Research: Marketline advantage database

Marketline advantage database provides access to case studies, company news, and company reports that contain market size, value, segmentation, shares, leading companies, forecast for each industry, including Aerospace and Defence. For the Aerospace and Defence industry, users can search and browse documents subdivided by subject categories, such as Aerospace Products and Parts Manufacturing, Space Programmes, Vehicle and Aircraft Electronics, etc.

To access the database, go: Law subject guide / Foreign legislation and cases / Air & Space.

Law Library Hours for Period of Final Exams

To ensure continuous access to our resources and study spaces during the period when Law students are working on final papers and studying for exams, the Law Library will be open for study 24/7 from April 6 to April 28. A valid McGill ID card is required for access to the Library after service hours. Our opening hours for the Winter term are also posted at the Law Library's webpage: <http://www.mcgill.ca/library/branches/law>

Law Library blog & Facebook

Do not forget to check the Nahum Gelber Law Library's blog, <http://blogs.library.mcgill.ca/lawlibrary/>, and Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/NahumGelberLaw.Library>, where you can find more of the Law Library news.

MCGILL LAW JOURNAL SURVEY

Dear colleagues,

It is with great enthusiasm that the Management Board of the McGill Law Journal invites you to formally provide feedback on your interactions with our institution.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on our ongoing initiatives: Recent issues, new website, podcast series, the Annual Lecture, la Conférence Francophone, recruitment, social media, The Journal: 60 years of people, prose and publications, Opération coup de main, and the Citation Drop In hours.

Please follow this link to access our survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FNV3DJ6>

Le Comité de gestion de la Revue de Droit de McGill

IT'S TIME FOR A RAISE

Dear McGill Law: It's Time for A Raise

Quebec's minimum wage will soon rise to \$10.35, while in Ontario it will jump to \$11. That's getting awfully close to the McGill Law faculty rate of \$12.

Are we willing to accept that jobs in our faculty are practically minimum wage jobs?

And what is this "faculty rate" anyway? You see it advertised on many, if not most, research assistant positions within the faculty. But when I started asking around to learn more about how it is determined, I came up empty-handed. I asked the LSA, profs, administrators, other students, and the union (Association of McGill University Research Assistants) representing research assistants, and no one could tell me who sets the rate or how it was determined.

I get concerned when a bureaucratic policy can't be explained. When was the rate last changed, if ever? It's also concerning to see the confusion amongst profs about whether they are allowed to pay more than the minimum faculty rate.

I spoke with one of the AMURE union staff who explained that Law may be the only faculty that has a faculty rate. He said usually it is left up to the discretion of the professor and that undergrad RAs can make anything from the current minimum of \$11.18 up to \$20 and even \$25.

The faculty's rate of \$12 is far short of what is needed for a living wage. But there are other negative effects for law students that come with such a low wage. Some students are not able to afford to work for only \$12/hour and therefore do not have access to these valuable opportunities that provide experience, references and a line on a resume that are all important for jobs or future education. It also means that students will graduate

with that much more debt coming out of school, which has a real effect on career choices and puts limits on students who otherwise might choose a lower-paying career in public interest law.

The one piece of good news is that research assistants are now unionized and AMURE negotiated its first collective agreement last spring. The new minimum for all research assistants at McGill will rise to \$12.70.

Forcing the Faculty's hand for a raise was a necessary step and is obviously going in the right direction. But this increase is not nearly enough, especially when we consider that wages should be rising regularly to account for inflation.

It's becoming clear that McGill Law has an odd relationship with work in its own faculty. There was a great article about the problematic phenomena of unpaid work in the October 29 edition of the Quid by Jennifer Anderson and Olivier Jarda (Dropping the "WRIT" = Paying to work in the Faculty of Law) and an important townhall that followed. I look forward to the recommendations of the ad hoc committee that was formed to look at the issue.

We also need to have a discussion about how much we pay our students workers. If there is anyone who can shed any light on how the faculty rate is determined I hope this information can be shared with our whole community. After that, we need to have a serious discussion about what a fair wage would be for research assistants.

The Faculty likes to tout its reputation on human rights issues from all over the world. If we are sincere about that then we should respect and value the workers right here in our Faculty.

EXECUTIVE EXIT REPORTS

Chers étudiants,

Vous trouverez ici-bas les rapports de fin de mandat des membres de l'Exécutif de l'AÉD. Nous espérons que ceux-ci vous donneront un bon compte-rendu des activités au sein desquelles nous nous sommes dédiés au courant de l'année. De plus, ces rapports devraient servir de guide à l'orée des élections de l'Exécutif, tant pour les candidats que pour les électeurs.

These exit reports must be read jointly with the report published in the fall semester as well as with the other Quid articles, such as those on the Electoral Reform, the Official Languages Guidelines and the Referendum on Accumulated Surplus.

Ce fut un honneur pour nous de vous représenter à différents niveaux, et nous remercions tous ceux et celles qui nous ont aidé avec nos initiatives variées. Merci d'avoir participé en grand nombre à nos événements, de nous avoir prodigué vos commentaires lorsque demandé et d'avoir pris de le temps de nous exprimer vos réticences.

To finish the year on a good note, we await you all for the LSA Appreciation Coffeehouse, which will be held on April 3rd! Come celebrate with us the end of the 2013-2014 school year, and incidentally, the last coffeehouse of the semester!

Sincerely,

Your 2013-2014 LSA Executive

VP ADMINISTRATION (ANNE-SOPHIE VILLENEUVE)

Bonjour à tous!

Ça a été un plaisir d'occuper le poste de VP Administration cette année et de servir de liaison entre la communauté étudiante et l'administration de la Faculté (tellement que je souhaite poursuivre mon travail au sein de l'Exec l'an prochain!). Voici quelques points saillants de mon mandat:

Tâches estivales

L'agenda de l'AÉD:

J'étais responsable de la conception et la compilation de l'agenda de l'AÉD. J'ai travaillé étroitement avec une graphiste de Copie Nova pour mener à bien cette tâche. L'agenda inclut notamment une compilation des dates importantes prévues au calendrier de l'année scolaire, une présentation des membres de l'Exécutif entrant de l'AED, ainsi qu'une liste des clubs de la Faculté et des comités facultaires et de l'AED.

Comités de l'AÉD et le Conseil de la Faculté:

En tant que VP Administration, j'ai coordonné le processus de sélection des membres des comités facultaires (comités où siègent des professeurs et des représentants étudiants, tels que le Comité des admissions, le Comité de la réforme du curriculum, etc.) et des comités de l'AED, entièrement composés d'étudiants, tels que le Comité Skit Nite ou le Student Well-Being Committee. La Présidente, le VP Académique (pour les comités facultaire) et moi-même avons basé nos décisions sur les CV, les lettres de motivation, et dans certains cas les entrevues des candidats. Merci à tous les membres de ces comités, qui ont travaillé très fort cette année pour enrichir la vie facultaire.

Développement de la nouvelle application mobile de l'AED:

En conjonction avec le VP Finance, Gajan (qui a été d'une immense aide !) et avec le reste de l'Exécutif, j'ai travaillé au lancement d'une nouvelle application mobile pour informer les étudiants des événements organisés par l'AED, par les clubs et par l'administration de la Faculté. Nous avons éprouvé quelques problèmes techniques au courant de l'année, mais nous travaillons étroitement avec les concep-

teurs de l'application pour rendre l'application plus efficace et plus utile aux besoins des étudiants. N'hésitez surtout pas à nous faire part de vos suggestions pour améliorer l'application !

Orientation :

J'ai également participé aux activités du Comité d'orientation, notamment l'organisation du Welcome Ball ayant clôturé l'orientation.

Year-Round Tasks

Website:

The website is your number one go-to resource to be informed about events going on at the Faculty, from events organized by LSA and by clubs to events organized by the SAO and the CDO. As VP Admin, I am responsible for updating these events on the website calendar, as well as posting all important documents pertaining to clubs or to students in general, including the LSA Constitution and minutes of all LSA Council meetings and motions presented at these meetings, so that students can stay informed of what their representatives are working on.

Listservs:

I send out listservs twice a week to inform students of what's going in the Faculty and of what the Executive and Council are working on, and to announce upcoming LSA Events. The listservs were especially important this year to communicate information and solicit advice regarding important projects undertaken by the Executive and Council, most notably the electoral reform.

Breakfast with the Exec:

Breakfasts with the Exec were held periodically throughout the year; each one was hosted by two or three Exec members. We hope that you enjoyed talking to us...and the free coffee!

Prizes & Scholarships Committee:

I was the student representative on the Prizes & Scholarships Committee, which is a Faculty committee responsible for the approval of new scholarships and the determination of the criteria used to allocate discretionary prizes. This year, the Committee changed the nomination rules for discretionary prizes so that students may only be nominated by their peers (as opposed to nominating themselves). I'm sure all of you know someone, or several people, that deserve to be rewarded for their contribution to the Faculty; I encourage you to nominate your peers for a prize! The list of discretionary prizes, as well as all relevant information about the nomination and allocation process, can be found on the SAO website. The deadline to submit a nomination is March 31.

Electoral Reform:

Along with the President, the CRO and the DRO, I participated in the project of reforming our electoral by-laws and constitutional dispositions. After much discussion among the Committee and solicitation of student input, our work culminated in a referendum where the majority of students approved proposed changes to rules regarding resignation and preferential voting. We have tried to communicate with students as effectively as possible during this process and welcome any advice on what we could do differently or more effectively.

VP-ACADEMIC (MARC ROY)

It has been my pleasure to serve in this fun and busy year as VP-Academic! My goals for the year were effective and responsive representation on academic issues, and to increase access and transparency to this aspect of the LSA's activities. En général, je suis d'avis que ces objectifs ont été accomplis. C'était un grand plaisir de travailler en équipe avec le reste de l'Exécutif, et en collaboration avec tout le monde avec qui j'ai eu des conversations stimulantes par rapport aux enjeux académiques à la faculté.

Summer Activities:

Over the summer months, I participated in revision of the fall-winter course schedule to help reduce errors, and minimize any conflicts or disruptions to faculty life. I made myself available to students for any questions and concerns they had about registration issues, essentially guiding people through what can be a fairly byzantine process and bringing more serious concerns to the attention of the SAO.

Rencontres avec l'administration :

J'ai continué pendant l'année scolaire à rencontrer régulièrement les gens du 4e étage, plus précisément la Vice-Doyenne Académique, et la Doyenne Adjointe, pour que nous soyons mutuellement au courant des enjeux qui affectent les étudiants. Ces réunions ont été essentielles pour préparer pour les rencontres avec les comités, et pour insister sur quelques points, comme la demande d'un cours de

Labour Law. Plus de ces réunions, j'ai encouragé le SAO de créer le nouveau «SAO Advisory Board», un autre mécanisme permettant aux étudiants de donner du feedback sur les services offerts, qui a le mandat de considérer les bons et les moins bons coups du SAO.

Orientation:

To begin the academic year, my primary contribution to the Orientation week was the Law Partners Program. I spent countless hours trying to find everyone an ideal match according to their preferences in a peer mentor, and I enjoyed seeing people maintain great relationships fostered in that first week. New this year, I encouraged incoming students to indicate if they had a preference to be paired with someone with a different first language from theirs, to practice their skills and to begin their time at the Faculty in the spirit of McGill-style bilingualism.

LSA Official Languages Committee:

This was also a big year for the LSA's Official Languages Committee! After several years of work, and significant negotiations with the Faculty, a new set of lignes directrices on the use of English and French at the Faculty which recognize the equal status of the two languages and McGill Law's unique bilingual character – a student initiative – was approved unanimously at Faculty Council and adopted by the Faculty, replacing an outdated policy that gave pride of place to English. I wish to thank the entire committee, my predecessor Alexandra Belley-McKinnon and Dominic DiFruscio in particular, for tireless efforts on this file.

Rencontres de comités:

J'ai participé pendant l'année aux plusieurs comités de la Faculté, tel que le comité du programme, le comité sur les examens et des évaluations, et le comité ad hoc sur la réforme du programme. Beaucoup de bon travail a été accompli, et continue de l'être, en vue de donner une meilleure direction aux professeurs dans l'attribution des résultats aux travaux et examens. Nous avons révisé les instructions pour la clarté, mais pas encore au niveau politique. C'est un enjeu pour le ou la prochain(e) VP-Académique!

Réforme du programme:

Finally, the curricular reform. I blasted students from almost the beginning of the year with listserv messages encouraging submissions and conversations with me and your other student representatives, and had countless formal and informal conversations with students and professors in all sorts of roles, to better inform my participation in the central committee. The work is not final at the time of writing, but a proposal is to be put forward by the committee to Faculty Council in April. I hope that in this curricular reform, as in other goals, this year will end with a great success!

VP CLUBS & STUDENT SERVICES (ALEXANDRA FREEDMAN)

As VP Clubs, my main role throughout the year was to coordinate the clubs at the faculty and to assist them in the funding and planning of their activities. My goal this year was to make sure that all students could easily get involved, and I am very proud to report that 46 clubs all organized incredible events this year. It is thanks to these dedicated students that our faculty is so unique and dynamic.

Clubs Day and Clubs Registration:

In September, my first job was to register clubs and organize Clubs Day. This day allows students to get to know all the clubs at the Faculty and for clubs to recruit new members. This year, I made sure that all clubs, no matter their size or importance, had a table at Clubs Day to promote their activities. Also, I organized early in the year a mandatory clubs meeting to distribute clubs important information such as deadlines for financing, rules for organizing events, guidelines on how to publicize events, etc.

Clubs Budget Allocation:

One of the most important parts of my job as VP Clubs came in late September when clubs submitted their budget for the fall term. Making allocation decisions can be very hard, especially when there are so many enthusiastic clubs that want to organize activities on a limited LSA budget. This year, I developed with the help of the VP Finance and the President a new comprehensive way of studying requests and preparing a budget for clubs. First, as a team, we spent many hours going through each allocation request in order to make budgetary decisions as a team. Furthermore, we created guidelines for allocations in an effort to make fair, consistent and reasonable budgetary decisions. I then sent out an individual email to each club explaining our guidelines and our budgetary decision. I also made sure to be available to clubs for any follow-up or questions they may had on our allocation decision. This whole process was repeated in January for the winter term budget. Overall, I spent a great deal of effort reviewing budget requests in an attempt to find equitable solutions that provide clubs with the funding they need to carry out their projects and ideas. In a year with new budget cuts and more clubs than ever before, I believe this approach was efficient and met my goal of making fair and informed decisions. As a matter of fact, I received almost no complaints from clubs, a big difference from previous years!

Fonds discrétionnaire du Doyen :

Être Présidente du Fonds discrétionnaire du doyen (DDF) représente une autre partie importante de mon mandat. Au début de l'année, j'ai dû mettre sur pied un comité du DDF composé du VP Finance et de deux autres membres du Conseil facultaire. À quatre, nous avons, à l'automne et à l'hiver, lu chaque demande de financement afin de rendre une décision budgétaire commune. En plus des lignes directrices existantes, nous avons élaboré d'autres principes pour guider nos décisions de financement afin d'assurer une distribution équitable des fonds disponibles. Aussi, nous avons élaboré un processus de classement des demandes afin de bien cerner celles que nous estimions prioritaires. Ces méthodes ont assuré une cohérence de nos décisions tout au long de l'année et ont permis une utilisation maximale des fonds disponibles. De plus, les lignes directrices établies à l'automne ont permis d'accélérer le processus décisionnel à la session d'hiver. Notre travail d'équipe s'est très bien déroulé tout au long de l'année.

Fonds des Journaux :

De plus, je gère le Journal Pool qui a été créé l'an dernier et qui agit comme un DDF réservé aux journaux étudiants. Avec le VP Finance, nous avons étudié les demandes de budget en octobre et avons alloué les fonds disponibles pour toute l'année entre les quatre journaux de la faculté.

Bottin :

Finalement, en tant que VP Clubs, j'ai pris en charge la préparation du bottin étudiant pour cette année. Cette tâche m'a causé quelques problèmes en cours de route, mais j'ai néanmoins réussi à mener ce projet à terme. Chaque année, très peu d'étudiants envoyaient leur photo au VP Clubs. Pour pallier ce problème, j'ai décidé lors de la première journée de la semaine d'orientation, de prendre des photos de chaque étudiant de première année qui voulait participer au bottin. Ensuite, ayant tenté sans succès de créer le bottin moi-même, j'ai décidé de déléguer ce projet à Copie Nova avec qui j'ai pu collaborer sur l'élaboration du bottin. Leur travail fut très efficace et le bottin est maintenant en ligne avec un nombre record de photos comparé aux années précédentes.

De façon générale, j'ai une plus grande charge de travail dans les mois de septembre et d'octobre et de janvier et février. Ainsi, l'horaire fonctionne bien avec celui des examens finaux! Au quotidien, je passe beaucoup de temps à écrire aux clubs afin de coordonner leurs activités et de répondre à leurs questions. Bien sûr, je rencontre également les autres membres de l'AÉD ainsi que le conseil facultaire sur une base régulière.

N'hésitez pas à me contacter pour toutes autres questions sur les clubs ou sur mon poste!

VP-EXTERNAL (JOHN SIMPSON)

Serving as VP-External has been exciting, and this year has passed by very quickly as a result. My work this year can be narrowed down to three categories.

The CADED Conference

The Confédération des associations des étudiants en droit civil (CADED) was brought back to life this year by myself and the representatives from UdeM, Laval, Sherbrooke, UQÀM and uOttawa. From June 2013 to February 2014, we organized the inaugural edition of the CADED Conference. The conference lasted from February 7th – 8th, 2014, and approximately 300 students took part. McGill Law was strongly represented by both students and professors at the conference.

Le but premier de cet événement était de mettre en commun les richesses intellectuelles de toutes les facultés de droit civil canadiennes et d'en faire bénéficier les étudiants. On a eu la chance d'accueillir des experts de renom sur plusieurs sujets, incluant: le droit Autochtone, le droit aérien et spatial, le droit des sûretés, et la propriété intellectuelle.

The process of working with representatives from five other faculties to plan, finance, and organize the conference from the ground-up was an amazing experience made even more so by the success of the event. I am hopeful that the CADED Conference will become an annual event that will promote connections and collegiality between the Canadian civil law faculties for many years to come.

SSMU

Siéger sur le Conseil de l'Association Étudiante de l'Université McGill m'a donné une perspective intéressante de la vie étudiante hors de la faculté de droit. J'ai été membre du comité des prix de distinctions, qui gère la distribution de trois bourses d'études de deux mille dollars pour les étudiants (vous pouvez soumettre votre candidature jusqu'au 1er avril 2014. N'hésitez pas à m'écrire un courriel pour plus d'informations!).

In addition, I was happy to table and help pass a motion bringing the Legal Information Clinic at McGill's fee increase and renewal to referendum. In other news, I also proudly supported the SSMU's recently introduced Mental Health Policy and five-year plan, which I hope will have positive effects for collaboration with mental initiatives at the Faculty of Law in years to come.

Sweaters

This year's sweater orders can be best defined as sporadic. The last sweater order of the year is March 25, 2014. Consequently, I can't give a final tally of exactly how many sweaters were sold. However, up until now I have processed the orders for 172 McGill law sweaters (not including sweatpants). 103 of those sweaters were purchased in a single order in October. Fall weather and a huge order of sweaters happening at the same time; coincidence? I think not. Wear those sweaters proudly.

In Conclusion...

I started the year with broad goals to create more discussion between our faculty and other Canadian law faculties and to generally help in some way to improve the McGill Law experience. I think that I have achieved those targets by developing my mandate and by collaborating with the rest of the LSA Exec. Merci à tous mes collègues, mes amis, et mes coéquipiers du LSA pour votre appui cette année. C'est sûr que je n'aurais pas pu avoir autant de succès en réalisant ces buts sans vous!

VP-FINANCE (GAJAN SATHANATHAN)

C'était un grand privilège de vous représenter cette année dans le poste de VP Finance. Nous avons accompli beaucoup dans ce portfolio : quelques points saillants sont détaillés ci-dessous. Je vous épargne cependant les détails de mon quotidien, soit d'écrire des chèques en vue de vous rembourser pour vos activités, mes nombreuses aventures à la banque et les courriels variés auxquels j'ai répondu diligemment.

New Budgeting Process

We successfully implemented a new, collaborative budgeting process this year as part of last year's bylaw amendments. Weekly emails, 40 open office hours and two consultative sessions led to some great input on the budget. With the help of this process, we managed to pass the budget at the AGM with no votes against! Since it was our first year using this procedure, we've also picked up some lessons that I'm excited to transfer to the future VP Finance.

We will likely run another deficit this year, though we've done some great work making up for losses we suffered earlier in the year. Through our new mid-year check we were able to identify ways to reallocate money in the budget that led to greater savings. As we adjust to our changing financial situation, there may be a few more years of deficits before we begin to break even again.

Accumulated Surplus Referendum

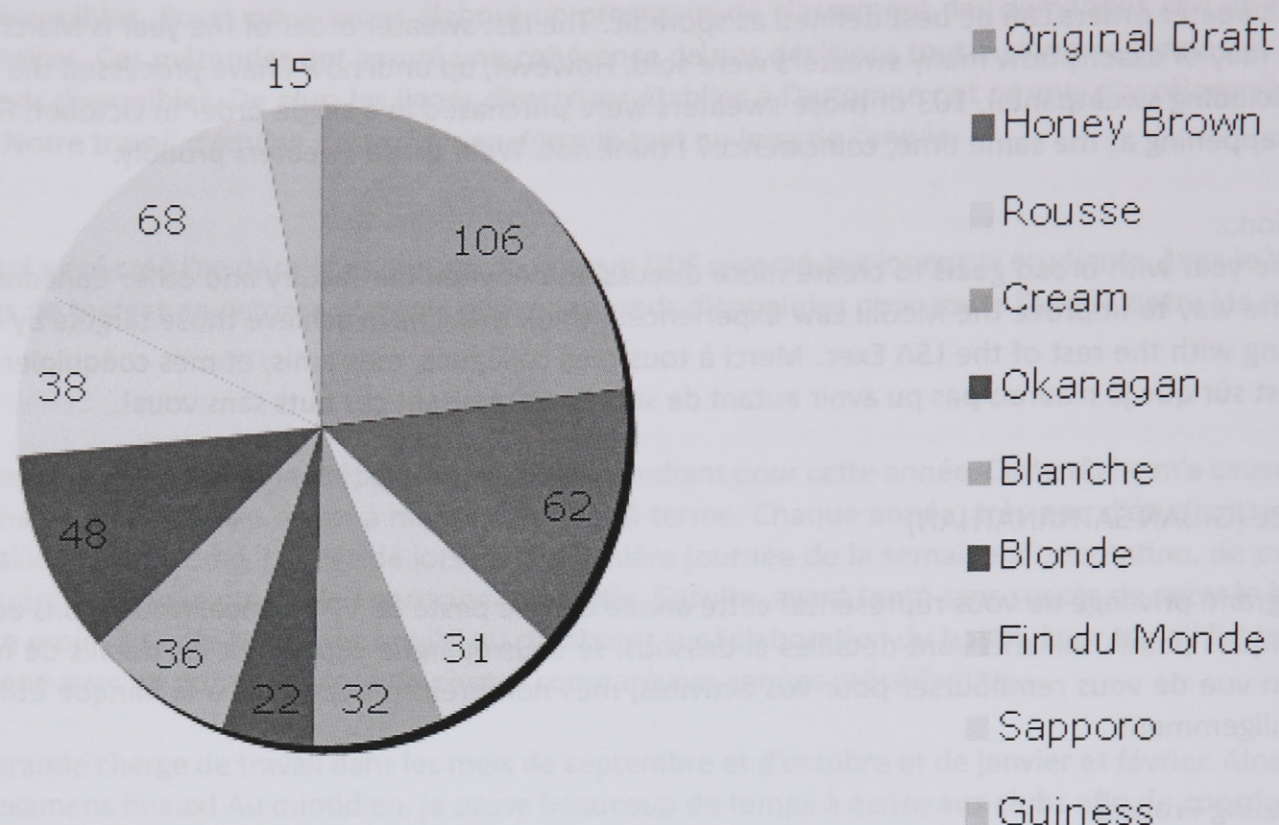
Nous travaillons sur un référendum afin de déterminer avec quelle option nous procéderons pour gérer notre 50 000\$ de surplus accumulé au cours des années précédentes. L'Exécutif de l'année dernière a pu réduire la liste d'options, qui sont maintenant au nombre de quatre: 1) les rénovations à la Faculté 2) les initiatives en santé mentale 3) les bourse étudiantes 4) compléter le budget de LSA. L'Exec de cette année a travaillé vraiment dur pour approfondir dans le détail les quatre options et élaborer des plans plus concrets, qui ont été communiqués dans le Quid de la semaine dernière. Les quatre options feront partie de la campagne référendaire pendant la période électorale à venir, mais si vous avez des questions spécifiques avant le début de la campagne, n'hésitez pas à me contacter.

Carbon Offsetting for LSA Funded Air Travel

This year we kicked off the Carbon Offsetting program for LSA Funded Air Travel. This project was developed by the Green Law Committee and implemented with the help of Planetair.ca. So far this year we've been able to offset 10.9 tons of CO2 emissions at a total cost of \$262.83. Thanks to all those who have been properly filling out the new cheque requisition form and helping to make this program a success!

Merci pour m'avoir donné l'occasion de vous servir en tant que votre VP Finance. Bonne chance à tous les candidats!

Coffeehouse 2013-14, in cases



VP-INTERNE (FRANÇOIS ARSENEAULT)

My position as VP Internal, which is essentially the VP Internal – Ongoing Events position in the upcoming election, was definitely a fun and worthwhile experience. It allowed me to meet a lot of people at the Faculty and I learned immensely about the ins and outs of organizing events. Nearly all of my responsibilities involved working with people, either by leading and coordinating a team or by facilitating student initiatives. In addition to working with students, I also work closely with the Faculty's staff and the McGill administration. This inevitably involves answering many emails on a daily basis. The key to being a good VP Internal, I think, is to generally be available to help with pretty much anything going on at the Faculty, since most people will usually need help with their events.

Orientation et Coffeehouse :

Les deux plus grandes responsabilités du VP Interne sont l'Orientation, qui se déroule pendant la première semaine de septembre, et les Coffeehouses, qui sont tous les jeudis pendant l'année académique. L'Orientation est toujours un événement clé de l'année et nécessite énormément d'organisation pendant l'été. Cette année, l'Orientation a été un grand succès avec plus de 200 participants qui consistaient d'étudiants en première année, en échange et à la maîtrise. Il y avait plus de 25 événements repartis sur dix jours, incluant le Welcome Dinner, le Pubcrawl et, bien sûr, le Welcome Ball. Le tout s'est très bien passé surtout grâce aux bénévoles qui ont participé à l'organisation et au déroulement des événements. Le comité de l'Orientation et les chefs d'équipe étaient très enthousiastes cette année et leur aide a vraiment fait la différence!

The other major responsibility of my position is everything related to Coffeehouse. Most importantly, I am responsible for the procurement of refreshing beverages. I thus ensure that the bar is always well stocked, as well as keep tabs on the supply. I usually set up Coffeehouse and help out the club organizing it that week. I also try to be around behind the bar to make sure everything is running smoothly. So far this year, every single Coffeehouse has been better attended than it was last year, based on sales. Good job everyone, I'm proud of you. Speaking of sales, I also made a chart detailing our approximate beer consumption for the year. Unsurprisingly, Sleeman Original, Sapporo and Honey Brown are the big winners this year. The Sleeman Rep recently told me that they will soon offer Kilkenny, so we have that to look forward to!

Voilà les grandes lignes de mon année comme votre VP Interne. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to come see me any-time and I'll be happy to talk. We still have two Coffeehouses left in the year and I hope to see you all there!

VP-INTERNE (MARIE RONDEAU)

Bonjour à tous,

J'ai été heureuse d'être votre co-VP interne événements spéciaux pour cette année 2013-2014, avec mon collègue François Arseneault. Ce rapport vise à expliquer sommairement mes tâches quotidiennes ainsi que ce que j'ai accompli au cours de la dernière année.

Orientation :

Une fois élue en mai, la principale tâche au cours de l'été consiste à préparer la semaine d'orientation pour les 180 nouveaux étudiants qui arriveront à la Faculté à la fin du mois d'août. Ce processus requiert tout d'abord la création d'un comité d'orientation, composé d'étudiants motivés à collaborer avec les deux VPs-interne tout au long de l'été et à travailler fort. Ainsi, une fois l'horaire décidé, nous avons tenté de choisir des événements qui allaient être propices à l'intégration à la Faculté et à la création de nouveaux liens d'amitiés. Il est également important de bien travailler en collaboration avec les le SAO et le CDO afin de coordonner leurs différents événements avec ceux que le comité d'orientation avait mis sur place. Voici la liste des principales activités que nous avons organisées pour les nouveaux étudiants : Welcome Ball, visite à la Cour d'appel du Québec, Scavenger Hunt, Pub Crawl, Welcome Dinner, Keynote Speaker etc.

Équipes intramurales :

Ensuite, mon rôle en tant que vp-interne consistait à organiser divers événements sociaux et sportifs au cours de l'année. Tout d'abord, j'ai essayé d'aider les diverses équipes intramurales à recruter des joueurs et à informer les étudiants, notamment les 1Ls, sur les opportunités offertes à la Faculté pour se joindre à une équipe sportive ou encore sur le gym de McGill.

Arbre-en-arbre et cueillette de pommes :

J'ai ensuite décidé d'organiser un nouvel événement à la Faculté, celui de l'activité arbre-en-arbre et cueillette de pommes la troisième fin de semaine de septembre. Je trouvais que cette activité était intéressante et différente, et le bon taux de participation a démontré que les étudiants ont eux aussi apprécié cette initiative. Le budget devra être revu, et peut-être essayé d'aller chercher une commande par un cabinet ou autre. Sinon, je crois que cette activité s'est bien déroulée, et qu'il serait intéressant de la répéter dans le futur.

Malpractice Cup :

La deuxième activité est la Malpractice Cup, un événement annuel en collaboration avec l'association étudiante de la Faculté de Médecine. Cette année nous avons eu le plus haut taux de participation, et ce de la part des deux Facultés. Un événement à préparer assez à l'avance et auquel il est très important de faire beaucoup de promotion.

Skit Trip :

Le plus gros événement qui incombe au Vp-interne Événements spéciaux est définitivement le ski trip. Il requiert beaucoup de planification et de promotion, mais je crois que c'est un succès année après année.

Cabane à sucre :

Finalement, le dernier événement que j'ai décidé d'organiser est une activité à la cabane à sucre, qui se déroule le 30 mars. Il reste encore quelques places, n'oubliez pas de vous inscrire ! Le transport et le lunch inclus pour seulement 20\$, nourriture à volonté, tir d'érable et belle journée en plein-air !

Party de fin d'année :

Aussi, j'espère que plusieurs d'entre vous se joindront à nous pour le party de fin d'année ! 1L-4L, tout le monde est invité à venir célébrer la fin des examens et de cette belle année. La date n'est pas encore fixée, mais les détails viendront sous peu.

En somme, j'ai eu beaucoup de plaisir au cours de cette dernière au sein de l'exécutif et j'espère que vous appréciez mon travail. Si avez des commentaires, suggestions ou idées, svp m'en faire part !

VP-PUBLIC RELATIONS (MATTHEW QUADRINI)

Premièrement, j'aimerais vous remercier pour une super belle année ensemble! J'ai vraiment aimé collaborer avec vous pour la mise

en œuvre d'une variété d'événements, où la nourriture et la boisson gratuite n'ont pas manqué de vous apporter le sourire aux lèvres! Évidemment, ces événements n'auraient pas été possibles sans la collaboration précieuse des membres de l'exécutif et du conseil de l'AÉD, ainsi que des membres de MIFA et l'MBLA et des comités Skit Nite et Law School of Rock. In particular I would like to send a special shout out to Michèle Lamarre-Leroux, Justine Brien and Nicholas Choinère without whom I may have lost all my hair.

J'aimerais également remercier Maryse Chouinard et Madeleine Hyde du CDP pour leur collaboration et leur soutien tout au long de l'année, Thomas Chalmers du SAO pour avoir étampé toutes mes affiches, les secrétaires du local 20 pour leur patience et pour avoir reçu nos colis quand j'étais dans un cours, ainsi que les concierges pour leur assistance généreuse après tous mes événements. Last, but not least, I would like to thank Jérémy Boulanger-Bonnelly and the rest of the Quid Novi team for their excellent work throughout the year!

Mission:

My mission this year was to maintain the relationships that my predecessors had developed between the LSA and its sponsors, while creating new opportunities for students to interact with potential employers. While sponsorship was slightly down, largely as a result of changes in the legal market I am proud of our accomplishments this year, and believe that I have left the LSA in a strong position to maintain its sponsorship objectives.

Événements commandités et relations avec les cabinets : Vous m'avez probablement remarqué le plus souvent lors des Coffeehouse ou des conférences commandités, où j'ai été responsable de coordonner les événements avec les cabinets commanditaires et de m'assurer du bon déroulement des choses. However, being VP-PR was much more than that, it involved constant communication with both sponsors and students to make sure that at every event McGill put its best foot forward. It was very much a pleasure to work with all of you, whether you were looking: to fund/realize a project, networking opportunities, or just someone to talk with it, I could not have asked for a better experience.

Over 35 sponsored events were organized at the faculty and with another 15 events being held in-firm. We created a greater number of opportunities for students to meet with potential employers and brought in new sponsors such as Clyde & Co., Leczner Slaght and Gowlings (Toronto). A new foosball table was donated to the faculty and an etiquette conference was organized jointly with the CDO. Moreover, the new LSA app and updated sponsorship catalogue will help to ensure the LSA's financial stability for years to come.

3500+ emails and one year later, I can confidently say that I have had a fantastic year with the LSA and feel very fortunate to be surrounded by so many wonderful and ambitious people here at the Faculty. I hope I was successful in making your year more enjoyable as well.

I am interested in hearing from you if you have any questions or comments about my work. Drop me a line at vp-pr.lsa@mail.mcgill.ca.

PRESIDENT (ELOÏSE GAGNÉ)

En relisant les rapports de mes collègues, je réalise qu'ils ont été très humbles dans leurs affirmations. En plus de leurs tâches personnelles (qu'ils ont accompli avec brio), chacun d'entre eux s'est toujours rendu disponible en vue d'aider un autre membre de l'Exécutif, peu importe le mandat. Je réalise ma chance d'avoir pu être à la tête d'une équipe aussi dévouée et compétente que celle-ci, et je souhaite ainsi féliciter et souligner chacun de ces individus pour leurs grandes contributions à la Faculté de droit de McGill. I also want to congratulate and thank all LSA Council members who have tirelessly guided us throughout the year. I am confident that together, we have made this Faculty a better place.

Gestion de l'AÉD

Être présidente de l'AÉD, c'est se retrouver à la tête d'une PME. Pour que le tout avance rondement, il nous faut être au courant de tous les mandats développés et de donner les outils nécessaires à nos VPs afin qu'ils puissent mener à bien leurs projets. J'ai donc supervisé et assisté chacun des VPs et représentants élus dans l'accomplissement de leurs tâches du début à la fin de mon mandat. Il a aussi été de mon ressort de donner des directions globales à l'AÉD et de préparer les réunions du Conseil de l'AÉD. Pour se faire, je me suis basée sur l'information collectée lors de ma dizaine de rencontres hebdomadaires, où j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer plusieurs étudiants et d'être mis au fait des items à aborder. Mes centaines de courriels mensuels auxquels je devais répondre ont aussi tenu un grand rôle!

As President, it is important to be interested in all the activities of the LSA. Indeed, a President is first and foremost a guide to its team, and her knowledge about the Faculty and skill-set are essential. But even more crucial, a president must realize that she is not only

managing a group of friends, she is also the face of student government and must understand that she represents all student views, including dissenting voices. With this in mind, I did my best to give students and clubs room to express their thoughts, and everyone's input has guided my day-to-day actions.

Making the LSA Open and Accountable:

One of my goals as President was to make students feel comfortable to reach out to the LSA to voice their concerns. I think that this was achieved by continuing our famous Breakfast with the Execs, but mostly by ensuring that an open-door policy was always applied by each member. The different services provided by the VPs were indeed given in this view, and we have taken the time to meet individually with every person or group that has requested to discuss an issue with us. Moreover, my team and I attended each and every LSA event, including all clubs coffeehouses and many other activities in order to show our support to initiatives arising from the student body.

I also took the time to write many Quid articles and published reports in listservs and on Facebook in order for students to stay on-top of the LSA's biggest discussions. We did this especially before important LSA Council decisions, when we wanted to make the student body aware of the issues and items that were under review. Moreover, I encouraged my Executive to hold their office hours in the Atrium or to organise town halls when the LSA was developing a new initiative. Many of you took the time to write back and comment, and your thoughts were very helpful. This strategy is something that I will pass on to my successor and that I suggest to implement as a normal practice.

Nous avons aussi été à l'affut des débats dans le Quid et sur les médias sociaux afin d'orienter nos actions. Par exemple, suite aux articles et événements sur l'octroi des crédits par la Faculté, nous avons créé un comité ad hoc en vue d'explorer la situation avec ces étudiants. Leurs rapports seront soumis sous peu aux différents comités facultaires, et seront à l'étude lors de la continuation des activités sur la réforme du programme. Nous avons aussi travaillé de pair avec le Student Well-Being Committee afin de les appuyer dans leurs initiatives. Sinon, chaque item, petit ou grand, présenté au Conseil de l'AÉD ou dans des discussions informelles ont été rapportés aux différents organes de la Faculté au sein desquels nous représentons vos intérêts. Cette ouverture et souplesse a été essentielle au bon déroulement de l'année et sont des qualités essentielles de l'AÉD.

Représentation à la Faculté

Il a également été important pour moi de développer des liens forts avec la Faculté et d'autres groupes qui nous entourent. En plus de mes rencontres hebdomadaires avec le Doyen, je vous ai représentés au Conseil de la Faculté, sur divers comités et à d'autres moments, notamment par rapport aux rénovations du OCDH. Je salue aussi le développement du «SAO Advisory Board» et le travail des représentants au Conseil de la Faculté et des membres des comités étudiants, dont plusieurs ont vu leur mandat augmenté. J'ai cru bon effectivement d'encourager le partage des voix étudiantes, et j'ai fait un suivi de près avec la plupart d'entre eux afin d'assurer que le travail soit effectué en harmonie avec les grandes orientations de l'AÉD. De plus, beaucoup de travail a été fait avec le Graduate Law Students' Association afin que davantage de liens soient établis entre les deux organisations. Nous avons ainsi pu mettre sur pied plusieurs activités sociales ensemble, et se donner un support mutuel notamment au Conseil de l'AÉD, ce qui a été clé pour l'adoption des lignes directrices en matière de bilinguisme.

Electoral Reform

J'ai mené à bien, avec le support exceptionnel de Stéphanie Bachelet, Michèle Lamarre-Leroux et la VP-Administration, de même qu'avec la patience du Conseil de l'AÉD, une toute nouvelle réforme électorale. Les règlements ont d'abord été amendés en vue de permettre une meilleure plateforme de promotion pour les étudiants lors des élections afin d'assurer que les électeurs apprennent à connaître les candidats. Ces réformes visent également à pallier aux problèmes de désistement que l'AÉD a connu ces dernières années.

Moreover, you were asked to vote on proposed changes to the Constitution with regards to making the voting system preferential, having a better procedure in cases of resignations and relating to the number of signatures required before bringing a referendum question forward. The two former initiatives successfully passed, while the second did not. It was great to see students invested in the debate by creating a «no» campaign for the latter option, which helped us gauge the students' perceptions better. Overall, the process went well, and we had a high voter turnout, which I attribute to our efforts in order to spread the word out, as described above.

Accumulated Surplus Referendum

You will soon be asked to vote on the Accumulated Surplus Referendum, on which the LSA Executive has worked very hard. Indeed, based on the choices identified during the voting process last year, every member of the Executive researched the issues and has reported back to Council with ideas. The details of this referendum have been published in last week's Quid, but once again, the LSA has gone out of its way to get your feedback and thoughts. More information on the campaign will follow, but the comments that we have gathered so far were very positive. I encourage all of you to get informed and vote!

Memorandum of Understanding with McGill

J'ai eu la chance d'être en charge de négocier notre contrat avec l'administration de McGill, une tâche qui n'arrive qu'à tous les cinq ans. Rien de majeur ne s'annonçait pour nous, mis à part quelques restrictions supplémentaires qui s'appliqueront aux clubs l'an prochain. La VP-Clubs a d'ailleurs été mandatée, avec mon aide bien sûr, à indiquer ces nouvelles procédures aux clubs afin d'assurer que cette transition se fasse sans anicroche. Somme toute, les relations avec l'administration de McGill sont très bonnes et je me suis assurée de les maintenir.

Représentation à McGill et à l'extérieur

À tous les mois, les présidents des associations étudiantes de l'Université se rencontrent afin de discuter d'éléments communs. J'ai eu donc l'occasion de vous représenter à ces réunions, et de peaufiner certaines de nos actions sur la base des initiatives des autres associations étudiantes.

I also attended many meetings organised by the office of the Deputy Provost Student Life and Learning, where I voiced out the concerns of law students, and helped the McGill Administration rethink its strategy for the upcoming years. As well, I embarked on an initiative proposed by the University of Alberta, which aims at reaching out to law schools from across the country. Your 1L Presidents have also been very active on the matter. The project is still at its inception, but you should hear more about the details of the initiative in the upcoming days, or next year.

Conclusion

Plusieurs choses manquent bien évidemment à ce rapport, mais j'ai tenté de vous résumer les mandats les plus importants sur lesquels j'ai travaillé. Comme vous pouvez le voir, être Présidente est un mandat particulièrement social, et je n'ai que très rarement été seule dans l'accomplissement de ces tâches. Merci donc à mon équipe, sans qui rien de tout cela n'aurait été possible, à la communauté étudiante et à l'aide inéluctable de l'administration de la Faculté de droit, qui nous supporte (dans tous les sens du terme) quotidiennement.

Law II

**DEREK
ZEISMAN**

BOB LOBLAW'S LAW BLOG: PTSD AND THE POLITICAL ABYSS, PART 1 OF 2

Hurl'd headlong . . . To bottomless perdition, there to dwell . . .
~ John Milton

I was probably the worst candidate in the history of the Conservative Party.

First there was the ugly nomination race, in which my opponents branded me a city-slicker carpetbagger from back east, trying to get into the House of Commons the quick and easy way.

Then came the near-fatal car accident, on an icy BC mountain highway only five days before Christmas. It was an ugly accident, complete with burning vehicles and a candidate who was left clinging to life in the ICU of his local hospital, having lost two-thirds of his blood. Throw in a broken femur, crushed pelvis and collapsed lung, and you had a perfect recipe for a "back-from-the-brink" story of political redemption. I made the national news with that dreadful crash.

Then came the very public revelations of alcohol smuggling, a nasty bit of unresolved legal business that instantaneously destroyed whatever goodwill my candidacy had created. Overnight, I went from something-less-than-hero to something-way-less-than-zero. I made the national news with that little scandal, too – times ten.

Then came the RCMP's public announcement that they would lay dangerous driving charges against me as a result of the car accident. If the "rumrunner" allegations weren't enough to finish me off, it was now official – I was politically DOA. "Toxic" would have been a polite way of describing my political pedigree in the months and years following my very own Perfect Storm.

Yes, I was probably the worst candidate in the history of the Conservative Party. And I have the scourge of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to thank for it. This, my friends, is the story of how emotional trauma can derail even the brightest-looking future.

I grew up with politics in my blood, from that first life-defining moment as a kid when I watched the 1984 Liberal Party leadership convention on television, live from Ottawa. There were only two things on TV during that hot and boring Edmonton August: The L.A. Olympics, and the Liberal leadership race. I soon discovered that the nasty struggle for Liberal supremacy between John Turner and Jean Chrétien was far better sport than anything the Olympics could provide.

I was an ardent Liberal all through my early years. This was not an easy or popular feat for a Western boy from Alberta, particularly in the wake of Brian Mulroney's biggest electoral victory in Canadian history: 211 of 282 seats swung his way in that electoral tsunami of September '84, and it looked as if le Parti Rouge had been routed for a generation.

But, like Don Quixote, I had a penchant for tilting at windmills from a young age. I grew up believing in underdogs, especially hopelessly outmatched underdogs. So the Liberals were my party, and John Turner was my man.

John Turner. They used to call him Chick. Chick Turner, because he had such a way with the ladies in his younger years. And not only the ladies. He was the golden boy of the Liberal Party throughout the 1970s; Pierre Trudeau's dazzling and inevitable heir apparent.

Unfortunately, time has a silent, sinister way of robbing even the best of us of our accumulated razzle-dazzle.

By the time Chick got his chance at the golden Liberal ring, in that Olympian late-summer haze of 1984, he was no longer quite so golden. The rust had set in – set into the man, set into the party. The Liberals were “3B” from the get-go – broke, badly divided and bereft of ideas. Mulroney swooped in for the kill.

I was an idealistic Liberal volunteer and supporter during those years. And my hopes gradually seemed to pay off: four years later, as the Great Free Trade Election of 1988 began to take shape, it seemed that old Turner magic had belatedly returned. Honest John, the defender of all things good and Canadian, would banish the corrupt and brazenly pro-Yankee Tory Party to the opposition benches.

Alas, it was not meant to be. The Tories won that election, and the FTA and NAFTA were Canada's fate, for better and/or for worse. But no matter, the deed had been done: in my eyes, John Turner had transformed himself from man, to myth, to martyr.

In the wake of the Free Trade Election, I often found myself thinking of old John whenever I heard Simon & Garfunkel's heart-wrenching rendition of *The Boxer*:

*In the clearing stands a boxer
A fighter by his trade
And he carries the reminders
Of every glove that laid him down or cut him*

*Till he cried out in his anger and his shame,
“I am leaving, I am leaving”
But the fighter still remains.*

If John Turner emerged a martyr from the election of '88, then for me at least, it was left to Jean Chrétien to play the role of Brutus to Turner's Caesar, Judas to Turner's Jesus.

When “le p'tit gars de Shawinigan” stepped onto the stage of the Château Laurier to announce his second candidacy for the Liberal leadership in early 1990, I was there, watching from the fringes of that gilded ballroom. But I had not come to praise him, but rather to bury him, together with my ties to the Liberals. For I felt myself increasingly on the political fringes.

I was still a Western boy at heart, but by that time I had transplanted myself in the nation's capital, as a journalism student at Carleton University. It was here that I began to feel, perhaps for the first time, just how marginalized Western Canadian culture, beliefs, and attitudes seemed to be in Ottawa's corridors of power.

My grandfather, a hardworking and proud Belfast native, was a great man who had escaped the clutches of Hitler's Nazis in the famous Dunkirk evacuation of 1940. He had gone on to fight the Germans with distinction in North Africa and Southern Europe.

He and his young family, including my mother, had emigrated from Northern Ireland to Canada following the war. He had built a new life for himself and his loved ones in his adopted land. But now, in his senior years, he felt that Canada under Tory rule had gone off the rails.

From my vantage point in Ontario, I felt much the same way. So when he recommended that I take a good hard look at Preston Manning's upstart Reform Party, I heeded his advice. And I liked much of what I saw.

Back in those early days, Reform seemed to be about making Canada a more democratic place, by transforming our MPs into a more empowered group of citizen representatives. Reform railed against Trudeau's “nobodies” and Mulroney's “trained seals,” and called on Ottawa to work for the people, rather than vice versa. Yes, it may well have been rhetoric – but I bought into it.

Soon I was doing volunteer work for the young party. And I rejoiced when Canadians – mainly in the West – succeeded in electing 52 Reform MPs to Parliament in 1993.

Within months of that victory, I found myself, a recent Carleton grad, with a full-time job on Parliament Hill, toiling away in the service of a newly-minted Reform MP from a place I had barely heard of, let alone visited: Kootenay West—Revelstoke, B.C.

I spent the next four years as a Reform staffer, both in Ottawa and in the riding. During those years, I came to love that picturesque corner of the country, located along the Canada-U.S. border,

border, halfway between Vancouver and Calgary. I met many wonderful people there, and in many ways it came to feel like home to me.

One Saturday afternoon in late 1995, I was moving apartments in Ottawa and needed to temporarily store some boxes in my Parliament Hill office. As I hauled them out of the elevator of the Confederation Building, I had a lot of work ahead of me. Suddenly, a man emerged from a nearby office. I recognized him as Stephen Harper, a bright young Reform MP from Calgary.

I had never said so much as boo to Mr. Harper before that day, but there and then he offered to help me with my mountain of boxes. He was a quiet man with icy blue eyes and a smile that looked more like a misshapen frown than anything else. But I appreciated his offer of assistance to an unknown staffer. He struck me as the sort of man whose heart was in the right place.

Ten years later, nearly to the day, I was the newly minted Conservative candidate for my former boss's successor riding. It was, rather unimaginatively, now known as BC Southern Interior. One day, shortly after my nomination victory, Stephen Harper came to town.

By then, Mr. Harper was the leader of the Conservative Party, created two years earlier when the remnants of the battered, tattered old Progressive Conservative Party merged with the Canadian Alliance, Reform's successor party. Mr. Harper was also the head of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in Parliament, having narrowly lost the 2004 election to Paul Martin's Liberals – now deeply mired in the so-called Sponsorship Scandal.

The Martin government was hanging on by a thread, and Mr. Harper had come to town in advance of the next hotly anticipated election. He was looking for votes, and I was to be his instrument of power in one of Canada's 301 federal ridings.

That day, I chauffeured Mr. Harper and his press secretary, Carolyn Stewart-Olsen (later appointed to the Senate by her boss) about the riding in my Volvo station wagon. I sat in the front seat with my campaign manager; Mr. Harper and Ms. Stewart-Olsen sat in the back.

I may have been driving the car that day, but there was no doubt as to who was driving the party. Mr. Harper's icy blue eyes were still there, but the odd, misshapen smile was long gone. He struck me as a man now perpetually distracted – distracted by a Big Prize that was now tantalizingly within his grasp.

Ms. Stewart-Olsen suffered for his distraction. Mr. Harper spent the entire drive barking out orders at his beleaguered press aide. As the minutes passed in that Volvo, he seemed oblivious to my existence. Instead, he focused his steely, watery blue eyes on his Keeper of the Media.

As I drove on through that warm Kootenay autumn, Mr. Harper directed a steady stream of vitriol toward his assistant – berating her, scolding her, rebuking her for everything said, and everything unsaid. Ms. Stewart-Olsen suffered valiantly in silence, remaining ever the dutiful soldier in the Great Conservative Cause, during our brief time together.

Just as happens to us all, the passage of time had changed Mr. Harper. It had made him a sharper, wilier politician. But time had also sharpened his meaner, baser, more animalistic instincts. Stephen Harper was a transformed man. But he somehow seemed to me less a leader of the people than a director of the people. It was a fine and subtle distinction then, but history has, I believe, borne out my unspoken observations of that day.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Dear Dean Topsakal,

On behalf of the Student Well-Being Committee, we would like to thank you for all the help and support you provided to the Faculty of Law and us. Thank you for all those times when you helped the Committee and listened to our concerns.

We are looking forward to continuing working with the SAO and with the new Associate Dean.

Best of luck!

Viviane, Andrea, Katie, Mariève
The Student Well-Being Committee 2013-2014

Farewell



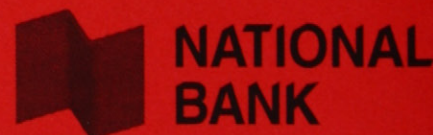
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